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# IMPERIAL POLICING



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# IMPERIAL POLICING

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL

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## PREFACE

I HOPE it will be understood by my readers, especially those in the Defence Services, that this book has no official authority. The opinions expressed and the interpretation of Regulations and of Service traditions are my own, though my intention has been to follow the general trend of orthodox doctrine.

In commenting on specific events I have had to commit myself to a number of "armchair" criticisms. Not, however, with the intention of either awarding blame or praise, but in order to suggest reasons for consequences and to stimulate thought on the problems involved. Without a much fuller knowledge of local circumstances than it was possible to acquire, criticisms are necessarily to some extent guesswork.

The narratives given make no claim to completeness, but aim at presenting salient features of the incidents and at giving some idea of the setting and atmosphere in which they took place.

I should like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to those officers on whose experiences I have drawn, and to those who have been good enough to read and criticise what I have written.

C. W. G.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE OF THE ARMY'S POLICE DUTIES

MATERIAL for this book was originally collected with the intention of giving to officers of the Army and of the other fighting Services, often called on to co-operate with them or to carry out similar duties independently, examples of the police work they may be required to carry out ; so as to provide some historical background to their study of a subject which is of increasing importance and about which there is very little literature of a permanent or easily accessible character. The subject, however, concerns a much wider circle. Officials of the civil government in the exercise of their duties, police, magisterial or political, have to work, when the Army is called in, in the closest co-operation with it; on occasions even under the orders of the military authority. A knowledge of the military point of view, and in general of the military aspects of the problems to be dealt with, would eliminate many possible sources of friction and facilitate co-operation in such cases.

Moreover, the general public, so far as it is interested in the maintenance of law and order in the outlying countries of the Empire, should realise what an important part the Army plays as a reserve of force in support of the civil administration. There is, unfortunately, an element of prejudice against the employment of military force to maintain order. A suspicion of ruthlessness in military methods exists,

and this is perhaps increased by the fact that as a rule much less attention is paid to the circumstances which have in various cases necessitated the intervention of the Army than to the controversy which occasionally arises over the action troops have taken. I hope that the narratives I have compiled will show that the Army can be trusted to act with good sense and restraint, and will tend to allay prejudice. Fear of this has often led to the intervention of the Army being postponed till a situation has developed which called for the exercise of force on a scale greater than timely intervention would have required. It should, I think, be widely recognised that the Army can be employed to prevent a situation getting out of hand, and not merely to restore one that has passed out of control.

In drawing up the narratives, I have attempted to give a picture of the circumstances which led to the crisis, the reasons for military intervention, and the military action taken to restore order and to re-establish normal conditions. I have been more concerned in showing the general nature and purpose of military action than in describing details of a tactical nature. As regards the latter indeed, practically no records exist. Police operations, unless they attain the dignity of small wars, are not recorded in despatches, and seldom even form the subject of military reports. Official records are often confined to reports of commissions of enquiry set up as a result of political controversy to ascertain how far the use of force was abused or necessary. Press reports are apt to deal only with the more acute stages of incidents; and furthermore, when an incident extends, as it often does, over a long period, interest soon wanes and no

permanent impression as to how it arose or how it was dealt with is left. Details of tactical methods used by troops in the small encounters which may take place in the course of police operations can, as a rule, only be obtained direct from those concerned in them.

I have said that the police duties of the Army are of increasing importance, but they have to a large extent changed their nature under modern conditions. They may be roughly grouped in three categories, though in the course of events an incident may pass from one category to another. In the first category are small wars: deliberate campaigns with a definite military objective, but undertaken with the ultimate object of establishing civil control. The conduct of such wars differs in no respect from defensive or punitive wars undertaken to check external aggression. No limitations are placed on the amount of force which can legitimately be exercised, and the Army is free to employ all the weapons the nature of the terrain permits. Such campaigns are clearly a purely military responsibility. They involve operations of a military character for which the Army receives training, and there is an extensive literature dealing with their conduct in all its aspects. I have not, therefore, included any example of this type.

The second category, and it is this which I have tried to illustrate in this book, includes cases when the normal civil control does not exist, or has broken down to such an extent that the Army becomes the main agent for the maintenance of or for the restoration of order. To a greater or less degree it is then vested with responsibility for the action to be taken. In certain cases, as when martial law is proclaimed, the civil authority abdicates its position temporarily

and is superseded by military government in the area proclaimed. More commonly, responsibility is shared between the two authorities in giving effect to measures required to restore control. Special powers which they do not ordinarily possess may be given to military officers; but in any case they are required on their own responsibility to take such action as the necessity of the situation demands.—To the third category belong those occasions when the civil power continues to exercise undivided control but finds the police forces on which it normally relies insufficient. In such cases the Army is employed “in aid of the civil power” and its responsibility goes little further than for the methods the troops adopt to give effect to the directions of the civil magistrate.—In both these latter categories the Army is bound to exercise the minimum force required to attain its object.

Of these three categories of police duties, it is the second which has become of special importance in modern times. In the Victorian era, when the Empire was in process of expansion, small wars were of frequent occurrence and at that time might well have been considered the Army’s principal police task. Now that civil control has been established in practically all parts of the Empire, small wars are of less frequent occurrence, and when they do occur, are generally defensive or punitive operations to protect our frontier regions from aggression. But the civil control which has been established still rests on insecure foundations; the edifice in some cases is liable to collapse and to require rebuilding. In others where the structure appeared to be secure it has developed weaknesses. The principal police task of the Army is no longer to prepare the way for civil control,

but to restore it when it collapses or shows signs of collapse. Subversive movements take many forms and are of varying intensity ; but even when armed rebellion occurs, it presents a very different military problem from that of a deliberate small-war campaign. There is an absence of a definite objective, and conditions are those of guerrilla warfare, in which elusive rebel bands must be hunted down, and protective measures are needed to deprive them of opportunities. The admixture of rebels with a neutral or loyal element of the population adds to the difficulties of the task. Excessive severity may antagonise this element, add to the number of the rebels, and leave a lasting feeling of resentment and bitterness. On the other hand, the power and resolution of the Government forces must be displayed. Anything which can be interpreted as weakness encourages those who are sitting on the fence to keep on good terms with the rebels.

In less serious cases, where armed rebellion is not encountered but disorder is of the nature of riots, communal or anti-Government, which have passed out of civil control, there is the same necessity for firmness but an even greater necessity for estimating correctly the degree of force required. Responsibility is often thrown on quite junior officers for the action necessary. Mistakes of judgment may have far-reaching results. Military failure can be retrieved, but where a population is antagonised or the authority of Government seriously upset, a long period may elapse before confidence is restored and normal stable conditions are re-established.

The responsibility of officers engaged in police duties is of a very different order from their responsi-



bility in military operations. In the latter case it is mainly for the method with which they give effect to definite orders; for producing the maximum effect with the force at their disposal; and for the extent of the demands they make on their men. In the former they are often confronted with an unforeseen situation and must rely on their own judgment to reconcile military action with the political conditions. They must be guided in most cases by certain general principles rather than by definite orders, and, as a rule, they have to decide what is the minimum force they must employ rather than how they can develop the maximum power at their disposal.

How are the officers to be trained for such duties? It is hardly possible to draw up exercises in which the work can be practised. One can formulate general principles, but the difficulty lies in providing opportunities of learning to apply them. In the absence of literature on the subject, tradition becomes the only means of broadcasting experience, and tradition is apt to be based on experience limited to a small number of cases. Tradition on the whole, as I think will be shown in subsequent chapters, has produced remarkably satisfactory results, but it has its dangers. It may, on the one hand, lead to excessive action; the traditions of the Indian Mutiny, for example, would hardly be a safe guide for officers called on to deal with a modern revolutionary outbreak. On the other hand, the experience of officers whose action has come under criticism may lead to inaction of others through fear that they will not be supported if they take measures obviously necessary. Failure through inaction is the worst offence.

I have attempted in the next chapter to give some of the principles and doctrines which have been laid down in official manuals or are generally accepted by tradition. Subsequent chapters aim at broadcasting experience of their application, and in some instances of the evil results which have followed their neglect or misapplication.

The main object of military literature and military instruction is to show how an army can develop the maximum of power with the resources at its disposal under varying circumstances. This book, on the other hand, is designed to illustrate military action achieving its result with the minimum exercise of force. Its imperfections may, I hope, show the desirability of recording the experiences of the fighting Services when so employed, and of publishing illustrative cases from time to time in a form easily accessible.

To minds trained to think in terms of the events of the Great War, the police duties of the Army, even when they take the form of small wars, may appear of insignificant importance. It is well, however, to remember the emphasis laid on them when President Hoover suggested to the Disarmament Conference in 1932 that the strength of armies should be considered as providing a police component and a defence component (though not, of course, separately organised bodies). His suggestion was, that in the armies of all nations a police component, bearing the same ratio to population as has the German Army under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, should be allowed. Numbers in excess of that ratio would be treated as a defence component, which alone would be reduced by disarmament agreements. This ac-

knowledge of the vital importance of the police functions of an army, even in the case of homogeneous nations, has still greater weight when applied to the British Empire, affected as it is by all the currents and eddies of racial, religious and political interests. Yet the numerical strength of the fighting Services of the Empire falls far below the ratio to population which the President proposed for a police component alone.

The hypercritical may object to the inclusion of the Chanak, and perhaps also the Shanghai, incidents among the examples I have given, either on the grounds that they did not take place within the Empire or (especially as regards the former) on the grounds that they were cases in which the Army was employed to support diplomatic action rather than as a police force. Both incidents, however, demanded much the same qualities of restraint and patience as are required in police work, and they afford interesting examples of the value of the Army for purposes other than war. Their inclusion was certainly not due to lack of other material; India could supply an almost unlimited number of incidents. In Iraq what amounted to a small war on a considerable scale took place before the mandatory regime could be firmly established; and, subsequently, since the Royal Air Force took over responsibility for the security of the country, there have been numerous interesting cases of the employment of ground troops in co-operation with air action to suppress disaffection, apart from cases where air action alone was sufficient.

I have thought it inadvisable to draw on experiences in Ireland, instructive from a military point of view as many of them were. Those who desire to

study irregular operations of a guerrilla character will, however, do well to read books which have appeared giving the personal experiences of some of our opponents. Such books, for example, as *With the Dublin Brigade* throw an instructive light on the psychology of irregular forces and give an opportunity of seeing events from the other side which is generally lacking. They reveal mistakes made by the regular forces and also the measures taken by them which proved most effective.

## CHAPTER II

### PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINE

WHEN the Army becomes temporarily the chief agent for maintaining law and order and for the restoration of the authority of the civil power, it requires to know: What principles should guide its action? What methods can it legitimately and effectively employ?

Certain principles are laid down in King's Regulations dealing with the action of troops when called out in "aid of the civil power", but the situations which may confront the troops vary so greatly in their nature and intensity that no hard and fast regulations would cover every case. To a very large extent the Army must depend on traditional doctrines, on discipline, and on its own common-sense.

In this chapter I shall attempt to discuss some of the leading principles and doctrines which have become well established and are illustrated in their application, or misapplication, by the incidents narrated in subsequent chapters.

Before doing so it may be well to consider the nature of the forces of disorder which may have to be dealt with. There are three main classes:

1. Revolutionary movements organised and designed to upset established government.
2. Rioting or other forms of lawlessness arising from local or widespread grievances.
3. Communal disturbances of a racial, religious or

political character not directed against Government, but which Government must suppress.

Revolutionary movements, again, may be divided into violent and, professedly, non-violent movements. The former may be on a scale which amounts to fully organised rebellion, necessitating operations in which the Government forces employ all the ordinary methods of warfare. More commonly, however, they imply guerrilla warfare, carried on by armed bands acting possibly under the instructions of a centralised organisation, but with little cohesion. Such bands depend for effectiveness on the capacity of individual leaders; they avoid collisions of a decisive character with Government troops. Their aim is to show defiance of Government, to make its machinery unworkable and to prove its impotence; hoping by a process of attrition to wear down its determination. Their actions take the form of sabotage, of ambushes in which they can inflict loss with a minimum of risk, and attacks on small isolated detachments. By terrorising the loyal or neutral elements of the population, they seek to prove the powerlessness of the Government to give protection, and thus provide for their own security, depriving the Government of sources of information and securing information themselves.

The suppression of such movements, unless nipped in the bud, is a slow business, generally necessitating the employment of numbers out of all proportion to the actual fighting value of the rebels, owing to the unavoidable dispersion of troops and the absence of a definite objective. It becomes a battle of wits in which the development of a well-organised intel-

ligence service, great mobility, rapid means of inter-communication and close co-operation between all sections of the Government forces are essential.

Non-violent revolutionary movements which aim, by other methods, at making the machinery of Government unworkable concern the Army little so long as they retain their non-violent character. Such movements, however, almost inevitably lead to rioting, often of a dangerous nature, due to the widespread character of the agitation and the difficulty of anticipating where or when violence may occur. Sometimes trouble may arise through an excitable mob getting out of the control of its leaders; at others it may be in consequence of the removal of their controlling influence. Government action must sooner or later be taken against the leaders to break up the organisation of the movement, and their arrest, causing simultaneously excitement and the removal of control, is the frequent cause of an outbreak. News and rumour travel quickly, and where a widespread agitation is concerned disorder will seldom be confined to one locality. There is generally an extremist element anxious for purposes of propaganda to bring about collisions with Government forces, and in some cases the criminal element of the population will take advantage of prevailing excitement to start riots which offer opportunities of loot. Whenever a widespread agitation is on foot, reasonable precautions and close co-operation between civil and military authorities are required to ensure that if the assistance of troops is needed their intervention should be timely. It is the duty of Army officers to keep in touch with the political situation in order to be prepared to act intelligently in any situation which may arise.

Rioting and disorders arising from grievances may occur in all degrees of intensity. In such cases the Army is seldom called in as a precautionary measure, but only when the situation has got out of hand and the police require reinforcement. Stern measures may be required to restore order and to protect life and property, but as a rule violence is due to a small minority and the mere display of adequate force and discipline will bring the more law-abiding elements, who are merely excited, to their senses. Judgment as to the amount of force it is advisable to employ and as to whom it should be directed against is particularly necessary, and troops must rely to a great extent on the advice and directions of the civil officials.

Communal riots of all sorts are distinguished by their bitterness and by the fanatical passions they arouse, with the consequent danger to life. There is therefore no excuse for hesitation or delay. The combatants must be separated at once and measures taken to prevent the renewal of fights and to check rioting or destruction of property, a common feature in these outbreaks. The impartiality and good temper of British troops is an invaluable asset on such occasions.

Although the character of the outbreaks with which the Army may have to deal in carrying out its police functions vary to such a great degree, there are certain general principles which must be adhered to common to them all. One is that questions of policy remain vested in the civil Government and, even when the military authorities are in full executive control, the policy of the Government must be loyally carried out. It is, however, the duty of the soldier to advise the Government and its subordinate officers as to the



effect of the policy, contemplated or pursued, on military action. Attempts to force the hand of the Government, or silent acquiescence in a mistaken employment of the troops, are equally blameworthy. The duty of giving advice may often fall on quite junior officers, as for example in the Cyprus incident in the matter of the arrest of the leaders of the subversive movement. It was for the soldier to advise whether, with the small forces available, disturbances immediately consequent on the arrests could be dealt with, and, on the other hand, whether, if the leaders were left to spread disorder, the situation would pass beyond the power of military control. Frequently advice turns on the question of dispersion of troops in small protective detachments, as opposed to a policy of greater concentration to enable counter measures to be taken. The former course often appeals to civilian officials who from their training hardly appreciate the ineffectiveness of passive defence or the crippling effect of undue dispersion of force on military plans.

Another equally important principle is that the amount of military force employed must be the minimum the situation demands. It should always be borne in mind that the hostile forces are fellow citizens of the Empire, and that the military object is to re-establish the control of the civil power and secure its acceptance without an aftermath of bitterness. When armed hostile bodies are encountered troops can without hesitation use every method and weapon necessary for their defeat or capture, but drastic punitive measures to induce surrender, or in the nature of reprisals, may awaken sympathy with the revolutionaries, and in the long run militate

against the re-establishment of normal conditions, although at the moment they may prove effective. Such measures should never be initiated by subordinate officers without due authority.

Allied with the principle of the minimum use of force is that of firm and timely action. Delay in the use of force, and hesitation to accept responsibility for its employment when the situation clearly demands it, will always be interpreted as weakness, encourage further disorder and eventually necessitate measures more severe than those which would suffice in the first instance. Subversive movements, or disorders of any nature, do not break out fully organised. Leaders in the early stages are apt to be more distinguished by their oratorical powers, and perhaps by capacity of political organisation, than for military qualities. Given time, leaders who are men of action will assert themselves, and a knowledge of the best means of countering Government measures will be acquired.

A further principle is that of co-operation. Even when martial law is in force the task of restoring order does not rest on the Army alone. The machinery and forces of the civil power are then at the disposal of the military authority and should be used to the utmost, not only to increase its power but in order to initiate at an early stage the process of re-establishing civil control and respect for it. When unity of control, which is perhaps the most important result of proclaiming martial law, is not provided, the necessity of close co-operation and of mutual understanding is all the more important. Anything in the nature of jealousy or competition to secure credit is certain to lead to lack of co-ordination in courses of action.

These four are, I think, the general principles to which the Army should adhere on all occasions when it is called on for police duties; but the extent to which civil control of the situation has been lost or is retained affects their application.

There are three different conditions under which the Army may be required to act:

- (a) When martial law is proclaimed or is in force, and the civil machinery is placed at the disposal of the military commander.
- (b) When the civil power retains its independence but co-operates with the Army in giving effect to special legislation, designed to meet an emergency and giving both Army and the civil authorities abnormal powers.
- (c) When the Army reinforces the police in giving effect to the ordinary law.

I do not propose to discuss the legal aspects of these three cases, but to examine them from the military standpoint. The sole justification of martial law is "necessity"; and the great advantage of proclaiming martial law is that it recognises the continuity of "necessity" and establishes unity of control. Unity of control makes the military authority the sole responsible agent for carrying out the policy of the Government. There is therefore less room for misunderstandings and misinterpretation of that policy than when the civil and military authorities are merely acting in co-operation. Decisions can be arrived at quickly and the danger of plans being the result of compromise is reduced. Recognition of the continuity of necessity is also an important factor in forming plans and in framing orders for the con-

duct of the civil community. For although troops are at all times justified in taking, and are bound to take, the action which the immediate necessity of the situation confronting them demands, their right to take action to prevent further outbreaks is very limited unless continuity of necessity is officially recognised. They can do little more than adopt such precautionary measures as would enable them to intervene again should necessity recur.

Other advantages of martial law are that actions not normally offences can be made criminal, or the scale of punishment for crimes can be raised. This particularly applies in the case of things done to hamper military action. Similar advantages accrue from the fact that judicial machinery is under military authority, and judicial procedure can be speeded up to ensure that a maximum deterrent and moral effect will be produced by punishment. The establishment of martial law, furthermore, greatly facilitates the establishment of an efficient intelligent service. It places the police intelligence organisation at the direct disposal of the military and also enables pressure in many forms to be exercised which will elicit information or check information reaching the hostile leaders. The advantages conferred by martial law in dealing with a serious situation are so great that they should be widely appreciated. Hesitation to apply it on account of political prejudice has often led to a worsening of the situation. It is all the more important for the Army to ensure that when martial law is applied no abuse of the powers conferred by it should occur, likely to lead to an increase of prejudice.

When it is impracticable, owing to the small force available, or for other reasons it is inexpedient to

proclaim martial law, it is incumbent on the civil authority to see that the military commander is given the necessary powers to enable him to work on a systematic plan. Emergency legislation often exists and can be brought into force with this object, but it can seldom provide in anticipation for all developments of the situation. Amendments should be made without delay, and it is the duty of the military commander to make his requirements known. Emergency legislation establishes the continuity of necessity, but it has the grave disadvantage of involving dual control of the situation. As a result, plans are too often based on compromises and sudden reversals of policy occur. Not infrequently these reversals take the form of a lightening of repressive measures in the hope of inducing submission. Such steps not only upset the plans of the military commander but are generally interpreted as signs of weakness, of lack of determination and of loss of confidence in military action. The release of prisoners is particularly dangerous, as they, as a rule, emerge more hostile than ever, and often with new plans conceived while in confinement. Sudden drastic increase of repressive measures, unless consequent upon accessions to the resources of the Government, or designed to meet new forms of rebel activity, is also to be deprecated. It is indicative of panic and will generally be followed by a reaction towards excessive leniency. The ideal to be aimed at is continuity of policy carried out with a firm hand, and in attaining this ideal much depends on a good understanding between the civil and military authorities, such as to ensure that measures are well conceived from the first and sufficiently firm to give assurance of Government's resolution. Some of the

points on which mutual understanding between the two authorities is very necessary may be worth discussing.

I have said elsewhere that civil and military views on the degree troops should be dispersed are often at variance. The civil inclination tends towards dispersion in defensive detachments, and the military towards a more offensive policy and concentration. It may be readily admitted that a greater degree of dispersion in police operations is justifiable than in ordinary operations of warfare. The initiative in the first instance must in the nature of things rest with the forces of disorder, and many vulnerable points are exposed to their attack. The first business of the troops is to render secure such vulnerable points as are essential to the conduct of Government and to the organisation of counter measures. This in itself generally necessitates a considerable degree of dispersion, and where the forces necessary to initiate counter measures are not immediately available, dispersion may be increased by the necessity for protection of life. This is, however, a different matter from scattering detachments to protect valuable property, or in the hope that the mere presence of troops will prevent disorder. The military view is, that once essential measures of security have been taken, further protection and the prevention of disorder is best provided by taking positive measures against the hostile elements. Anything that savours of passive defence encourages the other side and wastes power. Isolated detachments are themselves vulnerable, and the service by which communications are maintained with them and by which they are supplied is even more so, and involves escorts and other wasteful defensive

measures. Concentration of effort to regain the initiative and to eliminate the source of trouble should be the aim from the earliest possible moment. This does not necessarily imply concentration of large numbers at any particular spot. The weapons and power of Government forces are, as a rule, so superior to those of their opponents that numbers required for offensive action are dictated by the nature and extent of the area to be dealt with rather than by the fighting value of the hostile elements in it. Excessive numbers may be cumbrous and detrimental to mobility, which is of primary importance. The co-ordination of all counter offensive measures is the really important thing, and the sum total of the troops required may reach a high figure in order to achieve simultaneous action. To economise force, defensive measures must therefore always be subordinated to and directly connected with those taken for the suppression of resistance. When large areas are affected by disorder and the Government resources are insufficient to deal effectively with the whole at once, it is almost always advisable to concentrate effort in dealing with successive parts systematically. Complete restoration of order and the re-establishment of civil control in each successive part goes far towards convincing the loyal and doubtful elements of the population in it of the power of the Government, and renders them unwilling to do anything to cause a recrudescence of disorder when troops are withdrawn to deal with other parts of the area.

In fact, in police work the ordinary military principles of concentration and offensive action hold good, and only require modification in the handling of the striking force provided by concentration. Its ubiquity

and concerted action over a wide area have greater importance than the concentration of superior power at a decisive point. Mobility and continuous energetic exercise of pressure on a definite plan must be developed, as there is often no target against which a decisive blow can be delivered.

Closely connected with the development of striking power is that of reserves. Large concentrations of reserves, except as a preliminary step towards the initiation of a new phase in a plan, are seldom necessary. On the other hand, the elusive character of the enemy and their capacity for appearing unexpectedly makes it necessary that every commander should retain a reserve to meet unforeseen developments. The provision of reserves is especially important in the opening phases of disorder, before the Government forces have by positive action recovered the initiative. Since at this time there is, as a rule, a shortage of troops, the difficulty of forming reserves is great, and this is a further argument against dispersion and the multiplication of protective detachments. Such detachments as must be formed should have a reserve, however small.

I have already laid stress on the importance of an efficient and well-organised intelligence service, especially in the case where organised movements involve operations approximating to guerrilla warfare. The intelligence service is highly specialised and its organisation lies outside the scope of this book. There are some aspects of it, however, to which attention may be drawn. In all internal trouble the basis of the intelligence system must depend on police information. In the case of ordinary rioting the military authority relies almost exclusively on it,



and a separate military organisation for procuring information is seldom desirable and may lead to confusion. It is, however, essential that the Army should maintain close touch with the police organisation in order to form an intelligent anticipation of events and to satisfy itself that the information the Army requires will be available, and that the procedure for communicating it is satisfactory. When the situation demands military operations, although information will probably still come chiefly from police sources, it may be necessary to have a separate military organisation working in close collaboration with the police; or military personnel may be added to the police organisation. Such arrangements will vary according to circumstances, but the main object to be attained is that there should be no delay in communicating intelligence of military importance, and that the police should have assistance in judging what information the military commander requires. The police may have very full information but have difficulty in judging how it correlates with military plans. It may often therefore be advisable to allow military officers, with a knowledge of the military dispositions and plans, to cross-examine the police sources of information. It is, however, of the utmost importance that secrecy as regards such sources should be maintained as the police may still rely on them after military operations have closed. Although the average officer may not be directly concerned in intelligence work he will be greatly affected by its results, and he can indirectly help by intelligent and loyal co-operation in maintaining secrecy, and by not interfering in any way with intelligence agents. Information will not always be accurate, and reasonable judg-

ment must be exercised as to the extent it can be relied on as a basis for action; excessive dependence on it, and complete rejection of all information from intelligence sources because of previous failures, are equally unwise.

The extent to which the intelligence service can obtain information depends greatly on the attitude adopted towards the loyal and neutral population. These must be made to realise that concealment of information is a punishable offence; but every precaution must be taken not to expose to terrorism those from whom information is obtained. Communication of information to the enemy requires to be severely and promptly dealt with. Outbreaks of sabotage stand on much the same footing, and, owing to the difficulty of fixing individual responsibility, it may frequently be necessary to deal with them by collective punishments. It is in these matters particularly that officers should be vested with special powers, but these must at all times be clearly defined and used with discretion. In the absence of special powers, officers may rely with confidence on receiving support if they take such reasonable measures as are dictated by obvious necessity. Such measures as the detention of suspects, forcing the inhabitants to repair without payment damage caused by sabotage in their neighbourhood, or, at times, infliction of fines to pay for labour brought from elsewhere, are typical of reasonable measures which have often been justified. (When it can be avoided, troops should not be employed to repair damage caused by sabotage.) On the other hand, superior authority seldom approves physical chastisement or destruction of property, except in the course of quelling actual resistance. Individual officers are

forbidden to invent punishments; though at times punishments, not normally recognised, are authorised by responsible authority. In that case they are awarded and recorded in the same way as normal punishments. Punishments of a nature humiliating to a community, or which outrage religious susceptibilities, are contrary to the principle that no lasting feeling of bitterness should be caused. A policy of reprisals is always dangerous, as irregular forces are always likely to be more ruthless than those of an established Government. Defenceless loyalists are apt to become the chief sufferers, and the powerlessness of the Government to give protection has a bad effect. When reprisals are undertaken, the reasons for doing so should be publicly stated and the acts should be duly authorised. In the situation created by guerrilla warfare or by a widespread subversive movement the difficulty of codifying rules for the conduct of troops is obvious. The good sense of officers and a sense of discipline must be relied on, and martial law, which invests the Army with full responsibility, is perhaps the best guarantee that these qualities will be exercised and that all measures will be taken under the direction of proper authority.

As regards the conduct of actual military operations there is little to be said. It is a question of adapting ordinary military training to the circumstances. Mobility, surprise, co-ordinated action, energy and relentless pressure are the factors which must be exploited to the utmost, while the difficulty of anticipating the enemy's action makes constant precautions against surprise essential. Neglect of these give the enemy opportunities of achieving minor successes which have an encouraging effect out of all

proportion to their magnitude. Certain operations, such as the search of towns or areas in which rebel bands are concealing themselves, present special features, but although they must be undertaken in a systematic manner, the system may require modification, either from the characteristics of the hunted or the nature of the area to be searched.

Rules for the conduct of troops when employed merely to suppress riots or disorder can be much more clearly defined than in the cases where something in the nature of military operation is involved; and they are well recognised. Most of them are directly connected with the principle of the minimum exercise of force, or its corollary that every effort should be made to prevent rioters committing themselves more deeply. The difficulty of applying rules and of deciding, in the noise and confusion of a riot, on the amount of force necessary should, however, also receive recognition.

Troops may be called out as a precautionary measure when trouble is anticipated; but often the situation has passed out of hand before they appear on the scene. In the former case they should be moved early, and unostentatiously, to positions of readiness in the background, and if possible out of sight. Any marshalling of crowds that may be necessary is better in the first instance left to the police. To bring troops into contact with a crowd before it is necessary exposes them to provocative usage and insults. Moreover, the crowd becomes accustomed to their presence and is encouraged to think that stronger measures will not be used. To keep troops too far away may, however, make it difficult to produce them at the right moment, and those in charge of them

will be without full knowledge of the situation and of the ground.

When military assistance is not summoned until police control has been lost, immediate use of force may be necessary, but often the appearance of disciplined armed bodies will produce the desired results. As excitement is contagious in a crowd, so also a display of discipline has a steadying effect. Unless, therefore, fire or other extreme measures to save life or valuables are necessary, precipitate action should be avoided and should not be taken with the object of inflicting punishment for what has occurred.

Troops employed in the suppression of riots are often required to stand much provocation, and even casualties, before they themselves use force; but extreme risk of their being overwhelmed by numbers, or of indiscriminate firing occurring through loss of control, should not be accepted. Certain occasions in which troops should employ fire may be specified, though all are governed by conditions. Fire should be directed against leaders or dangerous individuals. It should never be opened except under the orders or authority of a responsible commander, if possible an officer. It must be strictly controlled and not continued a moment longer than necessary. The use of blank cartridge is forbidden, and to fire over the heads of assailants may endanger harmless people. Warning must, if practicable, be given before fire is opened. Subject to such conditions, it is clear that troops are justified in firing when property which they are posted to protect cannot otherwise be saved, also to prevent the rescue of prisoners in their charge, or to prevent individuals falling into the hands of a mob. Similarly, when other means have proved

insufficient or cannot be applied in time, fire may be necessary to disperse rioters who have evidently become a danger to life and valuable property. Moreover, troops have the same right as other people to use weapons in self-protection when their lives are seriously endangered by attack.

As a rule when rioters have to be dispersed the civil official in charge of the situation advises the military officer when he considers it necessary to open fire and gives warning. The military officer is not, however, compelled to accede to a request for fire, but must exercise his own judgment. He may, too, on occasions fire to disperse a mob entirely on his own responsibility, but he should rarely do so without the concurrence of a responsible civil official if one is present. The amount of fire to be used and the method of using it is always the responsibility of the soldier.

The military officer is the best judge of the necessity of opening fire when there is serious risk of troops being overwhelmed or being seriously weakened by exhaustion or minor casualties. He should, however, if possible without further endangering the situation, obtain the concurrence of the civil officer before adopting extreme measures. Another well-established rule is that a crowd should never be allowed to come into close physical contact with troops, involving a hand-to-hand struggle. If it were permitted there would not only be danger of troops being overwhelmed by numbers, but it would also become impossible to control men in the use of their weapons. For somewhat similar reasons troops should not, when it can be avoided, be required to effect arrests. Although they can be used to support the

police and prevent attempts at escape, the actual arrests should if possible be carried out by the latter, even when the plans for arrest are made by the military authority.

It will be readily understood how great is the responsibility of the soldier in every case in which he may be called on to use his weapons in support of the civil power. The presence of the civil official does not relieve him of responsibility; in some cases, as when it is necessary to override advice, it may add to it. Cool judgment, patience and a knowledge of the difficulties and point of view of his civil colleague are essential, but to have thought over all aspects of the problem beforehand will prove of assistance. In any case the soldier cannot afford to be intimidated by the responsibilities of his position, or by the fear that his actions will not be supported. He will rarely fail to receive support if he has acted with reasonable moderation and in accordance with what he conscientiously considered necessary. On the other hand, inaction and refusal to accept responsibility is likely to shake confidence in him even when he is not directly censured.

Before closing this chapter my non-military readers may wish me to say a little about the use of modern weapons and equipment in connection with police duties. When armed rebellion is encountered, the only limitations to their use, as I have said, are those imposed by the nature of the terrain and the characteristics of the enemy. What has been gained is perhaps the increased mobility that modern weapons directly or indirectly confer. Increased fire power of rifles and automatic weapons enables columns to be kept smaller and less encumbered with trans-

port. Defensive detachments of all sorts can be reduced in size, releasing more men for offensive duties and simplifying the supply question. Motor conveyance where it can be used is of inestimable value, not only in speeding up movement but by bringing men fresh to the ground where they have to operate. Wireless has added immensely to the possibilities of co-ordinated action. The Air Service, even when the nature of the ground and of the enemy reduce its potentialities for offensive action or for reconnaissance, removes some of the danger which arises where ground communications with detached posts are interrupted. Both as a rapid means of conveying troops to a critical point and in co-ordinating movements of Army troops it has frequently been of great value. All these factors tend towards mobility and increase possibilities of rapid offensive operation, but infantry still remains the chief offensive agent; and it is the one which has gained most by increased mobility. Armoured fighting vehicles require special and favourable conditions to enable their full potentialities to be exploited, though they may often prove a useful adjunct to an infantry or mounted force. Armoured cars, with their speed, silence and protection, given suitable country, can be put to many uses, and when infantry are moving by motor transport they become almost an essential addition. Acting alone, the limitations to their power of taking prisoners and to their cross-country capacity are obvious disadvantages. The tank in its present form has, I think, few advantages over armoured cars for police operations, unless there are sufficient track vehicles available to enable a composite mobile column to be formed possessing cross-country capacity. Much, of course, depends on



the nature of the country and character of the opposition expected; but, speaking generally, the tank is an unnecessarily powerful weapon for police work and has the disadvantage of noisiness; and in many areas the use of heavy armoured vehicles is restricted by the nature of bridges which exist or could be constructed with limited resources. In most cases of internal risings artillery can play little part, though a few light howitzers to deal with resistance in houses or fortified strongholds may be necessary. The problem for the military commander in the circumstances we are considering is, however, seldom what resources he would wish to have, but how he can make the best use of what is actually available.

When it is a matter of suppressing rioting some of the advantages conferred by modern weapons and their limitations should be understood. The rifle and bayonet are still the weapons chiefly to be relied on. The sight of cold steel has a calming effect, and the steady advance of a line of bayonets has often sufficed to disperse a mob without resort to firing. When the temper of the rioters is very violent or the detachment of troops small, the risk of these becoming engaged in actual bayonet-fighting must, however, not be taken.

The effect of fire is generally not due to the casualties it causes, but to the fact that it demonstrates the determination of the authorities. Unless the use of fire is too long delayed, a single round often is all that is necessary to carry conviction. Rifle fire, again if used in time, is easily controlled and can be directed against dangerous individuals, whereas, though single shots can be fired from machine guns, being fewer in number it is less easy to ensure that the

selected individual can be picked out by them. A certain prejudice exists against the employment of machine guns in dealing with internal disturbances, due perhaps to the fact that in other countries they have on occasion been ruthlessly used and on account of their potential destructive effect. This prejudice is, I think, mistaken and due to misapprehension. Machine guns can be usefully employed without any suspicion of ruthlessness. Their volume of fire can be easily controlled, and they have the great advantage of firing from a steady mounting. They can be laid to deny access to a street which has been cleared, to cover parties forcing entrance to houses, and for many other special occasions when rifle fire of excited men is insufficiently accurate. Moreover, the intimidating effect of machine-gun fire is so great that some relaxation of the rule that fire should never be directed over the heads of the crowd is, I think, permissible; as the steadiness of the weapon makes it easy to find a stop butt which eliminates the danger of casualties to unoffending people. Machine guns are also of value, especially in their deterrent effect, when there is a question of protecting Government buildings or other vulnerable points.

The question of the employment of armoured fighting vehicles will be discussed in the chapter describing riots in Peshawar. They are undoubtedly an adjunct of great value, but it is possible to attach too much importance to the moral effect of their appearance, and the dangers which may arise when their mobility and fire power cannot be exploited should be recognised. Speaking generally, in dealing with mobs, it is the weapons which are easy to control and have the quality of selectiveness which are most suit-

able. Great destructive power is seldom required, and the more powerful the weapon the greater the necessity for preventing a crowd closing on it. Artillery fire for obvious reasons practically never comes into the picture, but it is well to remember that cavalry may still be used with great moral effect. The slipperiness of modern streets, the ease with which wire obstacles can be constructed, and the probability that some of the crowd will possess automatic pistols tend, however, to restrict their use.

It is sometimes advocated that troops called out in aid of the civil power should be specially armed with non-lethal weapons, such as batons. This has occasionally been done in view of particular circumstances—the streets of Cairo have, for example, been cleared by cavalry armed with the hafts of entrenching tools; but the arguments against such a course are generally very strong. The moral effect of the appearance of troops depends largely on the fact that they carry lethal weapons. It is a warning to spectators that it is time to get away and it awakens the more moderate element to the seriousness of the situation. The use of non-lethal weapons also implies the probability of troops becoming engaged in hand-to-hand conflicts of a nature for which they are not specially trained nor physically specially fitted. Moreover, when order has been again restored, troops mix unarmed with the civil population and reprisals on defenceless men are apt to occur, as the action of troops loses much of its impersonal character when hand-to-hand struggles have taken place. The effect on the discipline of troops is generally bad when non-lethal weapons are used, both at the moment, owing to the difficulty of maintaining control, and sub-

sequently due to excitement engendered by their use. There are many other reasons which can be advanced against the adoption of such a course, and it should never be followed without the sanction of the highest responsible military authority.

This does not, however, preclude relieving a certain number of men of a party of their more cumbersome weapons when engaged on a particular duty, such as carrying out arrests, though fully armed men should be in close support. Similarly in certain circumstances it may be better to post a sentry without his rifle, but covered by a second man fully armed in a less exposed position. That is a common-sense measure which may be advisable when attempts to rush sentries in order to secure their weapons are possible, and it has the further advantage of reducing the risk of innocent persons being shot by a "jumpy" man. It is not a matter of policy. When, as a matter of policy, troops with non-lethal weapons are employed, a reserve of fully armed men should always be at hand.

The weapons the enemy employs in modern conditions also requires some consideration. Automatic pistols, or grenades, used by a small number of extremists in a crowd may greatly increase the difficulties of the situation. It is, however, the weapon of propaganda which has made the task of the Army harder, encouraged as it is by the trend of modern sentiment and the growth of the power of the press. The increased part taken by women in subversive movements is an additional complication which requires careful handling or it will be used to strengthen the propaganda weapon. The Army cannot afford to ignore propaganda, but it requires the support of public opinion to reduce the effectiveness of that weapon.

## CHAPTER III

### AMRITSAR, 1919

FEW incidents connected with the employment of troops to restore order have given rise to so much bitter controversy or have left such a lasting impression as General Dyer's action at Amritsar. Controversy and propaganda have tended to obscure the issue. The impression left on the minds of many not fully acquainted with admitted facts is that an officer who decides to take firm action may be sacrificed under political pressure. On the other hand, many sections of public opinion have drawn the conclusion that military control involves ruthlessness and reprisals to an extent which brings all action inspired by military authority under suspicion. The facts of the incident were investigated, but the investigation which took place after a regrettable delay, and under political pressure when feeling ran high, was conducted by a Committee (generally known as the Hunter Committee) so composed that its findings were almost bound to be divergent and confusing. The majority and minority reports presented by the Committee did little to allay the prejudice aroused by controversy, and the divergent findings were more closely studied than the actual facts.

A study of the facts enables one to see why the Government and military authorities could not support the extreme action taken by General Dyer and to realise how far his judgment was at fault and his

action at variance with accepted principles. It is, of course, asserted by many competent judges that General Dyer prevented an extremely serious and dangerous situation from developing into something far worse, and that the casualties he inflicted were insignificant in comparison to those which a spread of disorder would have entailed. That is a conclusion which there is no means of verifying and does not affect the question whether General Dyer was within his rights. Whether his action was justifiable or no, thus remains a matter of opinion; whether he was within his rights as a matter of principle can be tested and lessons deduced accordingly.

General Dyer's action dominates the whole of the Amritsar incident, but the events which led up to it are of interest in illustrating the task of troops quite apart from their bearing on his decision. They are recorded in the report of the Committee of Investigation together with incidents which occurred practically simultaneously at other places in India.

The beginning of 1919 found India in a condition of acute unrest. Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs were united to an unusual extent in their hostility to Government. The doctrine of self-determination, the future of Turkey, the new Government of India Act and other subjects which had been much in the press served to encourage political feeling and expectation of great changes, while other consequences of the war, such as the rise of cost of living and war-time restrictions, caused discontent. The conditions were favourable for agitation, and any Government measures which could be described as reactionary and opposed to the demand for Home Rule or an

increased degree of freedom lent themselves to attack. The passing of the Rowlatt Acts, which were considered to confer power on the executive uncontrolled by the judiciary, and therefore to be a check to constitutional reform, gave agitators an opportunity of exciting opposition to the Government. Wild misrepresentation of the effect of these Acts was indulged in, the press was full of bitter abuse, and as a protest against them Mr. Gandhi inaugurated his civil disobedience movement, calling a general hartal which led to fierce rioting at various centres. As a consequence the Government ordered his arrest and that of other leaders who had committed clear breach of the laws. Gandhi was actually arrested on 9th April following on his disobedience of an order not to proceed to Delhi.

The original hartal called by him had taken place in some cases on 30th March, in others on the 6th April, and not, as had been intended, on one day. It had been planned that the hartal should take place on the Sunday immediately following the passing of the Act, but as it was found that this did not give sufficient time to broadcast the order, an attempt was made to postpone the demonstration for a week. The consequent confusion had the unfortunate result of spreading the disturbances which occurred in connection with the hartals over a longer period, and news of events which took place on the first date increased hostility of crowds on the second. Gandhi's arrest was the signal for fresh hartals and fresh disturbances, and large parts of India were now seething with excitement, while wild rumours intensified the sufficiently serious situation. The British community was not unnaturally alarmed, not only by atroci-

ties which had been committed in the course of the rioting, but by the possible development of such widespread disorder. When rioting results from an organised movement, the Mutiny becomes present to all European minds.

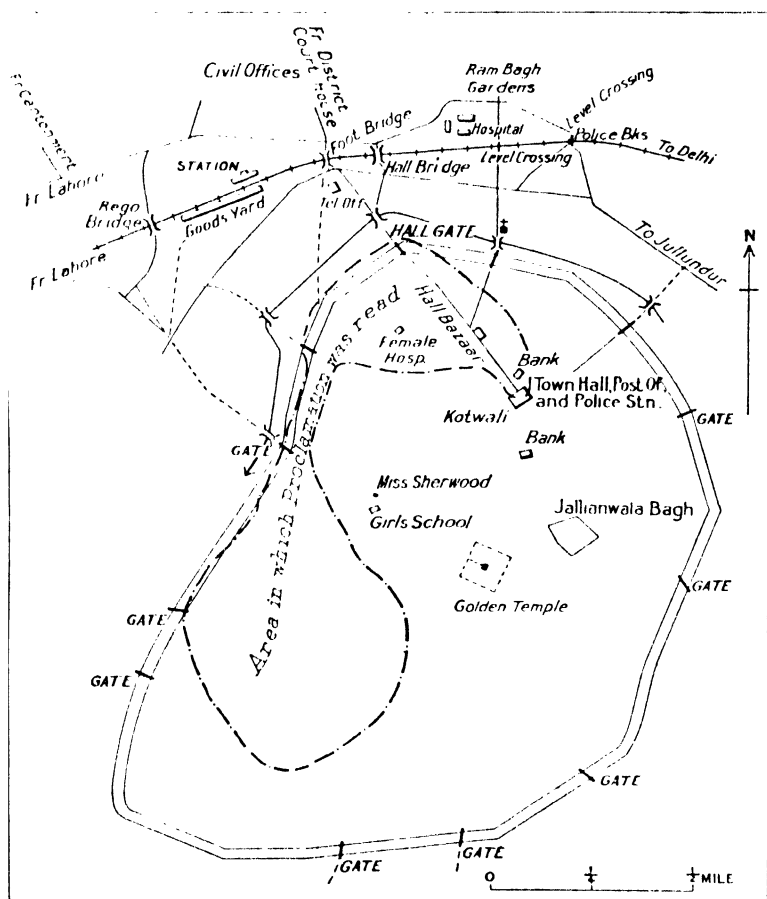
In the prevailing conditions Amritsar was likely to prove a danger point. It is an important trade centre in the Punjab with 150,000 inhabitants, Moslems and Hindus both strongly represented. Sikhs also have special interest in it from its position and because the Golden Temple of their sect is situated there. The *rapprochement* between the three communities existing at the time made it a convenient centre for political demonstrations, and it had been selected as the meeting-place of the All India Congress in December 1919. Everything, in fact, conspired to make Amritsar politically minded, and its most active and influential leaders were Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal, both of whom had been vigorous in their complaints against the Government and had joined the civil disobedience movement.

The hartal called by Gandhi was duly held on 30th March and proved successful beyond expectation. It stopped the whole business of the city but did not lead to violence of any kind.

Doubts, however, arose as to whether the hartal had taken place on the right date, and it was decided that a second hartal was necessary on the 6th to comply with Gandhi's amended instruction. This hartal again went off quietly, though again all business was stopped. Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal were probably responsible for the decision to hold it against the views of more moderate leaders, as previously the Deputy Commissioner (Mr. Irving)



## AMRITSAR CITY



had been informed by leading citizens, who were alarmed by riots which occurred at Delhi, that it would not take place.

Although the two leaders do not appear to have openly disobeyed orders which they had received prohibiting them from speaking in public, yet Mr. Irving was disturbed by signs that they were able to override the more moderate members of the local Congress Committee, and he looked on the hartals as a mere step to test their influence and organisation with a view to more extreme methods.

On the 8th of April he wrote to the Punjab Government expressing his views and pressing urgently for an increase of the garrison. He stated that resolute action could not be taken in the city without leaving the civil lines undefended, and that in any case, in the event of a riot, nine-tenths of the city must be abandoned; even to defend the civil lines and railway station while maintaining communication open with the police station would be difficult. He had given up hopes, which he had formerly held, that he could by personal communication restrain Dr. Kitchlew.

The garrison at the time consisted of some 180 men of the Somerset Light Infantry and 40 to 50 mounted men of a Royal Field Artillery column stationed in the cantonment north of the city. This and the civil lines are separated from it by the main line of the North Western Railway. The chief police station (Kotwali), the Town Hall and the Post Office are situated together in the centre of the northern half of the city and the main road connecting them with the civil lines runs along Hall Bazaar, through Hall Gate and across the railway by Hall Bridge; to

the west of this route and between it and the railway station is an iron footbridge. Other crossings, off the direct route, are shown on the sketch map.

In consequence of Mr. Irving's letter the Punjab Government on the 9th April ordered the deportation and internment of the two suspect leaders under the provisions of the Defence of India Act, and at the same time agreed to the necessity of early reinforcement of the garrison. On that day, too, further indications of the abnormal state of the political atmosphere was given as it happened to be the date of a Hindu festival. Under ordinary conditions Moslems take no part, other than hostile, in the festival, but on this occasion it was seized on as an opportunity of demonstrating and promoting the Hindu-Moslem unity which Dr. Kitchlew had been active in encouraging for political motives. Again, however, no untoward events occurred and the procession actually halted while the band played God Save the King in front of the Deputy Commissioner, who was watching from a verandah.

The orders for the arrest of the two leaders were received on the night of the 9th, and at a conference held by Mr. Irving, which Captain Massey commanding the station attended, it was decided to instruct them to come to Mr. Irving's own house at 10 o'clock the following morning, where they would be quietly arrested and removed by motor-car under police escort. The hope was that this plan would enable the arrest to be carried out quietly and without interference. Arrangements were made, however, to prevent attempts at a rescue; and as a precautionary measure, in the event of trouble when the news of the

arrest became known, troops and police were to take up positions prescribed by the internal security scheme. That these precautions were treated seriously is shown by the fact that the officer left in command at the fort received definite orders not to hesitate to fire in case of an attack on the railway station, or to secure the safety of women and children.

The disposition of the forces were: British infantry in reserve at Rambagh Gardens; a police reserve of 75 men in the city at the Kotwali; mounted pickets on the railway at the Rego Bridge, Hall Bridge and the Hospital level crossing; and a police picket at the Police Barracks level crossing. Three European magistrates were detailed to watch these crossings and to prevent a crowd attempting to approach the district Court House. Peaceful persuasion was to be used as far as possible, but military force if necessary.

No body of persons exceeding five were to be allowed to cross the railway, though under the circumstances it was not practicable to promulgate this order in advance.

Arrangements were also made for the removal of women and children to the fort by ambulance if there were danger.

These arrangements, provided that the constituent elements understood what was expected from them, were probably as good as the size of the force available permitted, except in certain details which will be commented on later. The question obviously arises whether the arrests should have been postponed till the reinforcement of the garrison, asked for and approved, had been carried out. It was admitted that nine-tenths of the city must pass out of control in the event of serious rioting, and the measures taken

were nearly all defensive in their nature for the protection of the cantonments and civil lines.

The majority report of the Hunter Committee considered that the opportunity of effecting the arrests quickly and quietly was rightly taken and that the extent and nature of the disturbances which followed could not have been foreseen. It is legitimate to doubt whether in arriving at this conclusion the Committee attached sufficient weight to the defensive nature of the precautions and to the danger lest a mob, deprived of its most influential leaders, should get out of control of moderate influences to a degree necessitating control by force. In this connection it should be noted that the British infantry were practically tied to the protection of the European quarter and its inhabitants. The police reserve of 75 armed men was the sole and inadequate force to maintain control within the city in support of about 100 unarmed constables employed there as usual.

An omission to warn Europeans not to enter the city is presumably partly accounted for by the necessity of secrecy; but it may also have been due to the fact that hitherto no strong anti-European feeling had been shown and to the theoretically non-violent nature of the political movement. The omission is inconsistent with the arrangements made for the security of women and children, but it must be remembered that the latter arrangements were to some extent automatically made under the prearranged plan.

The arrests were duly carried out at about 10 A.M., and half an hour later the prisoners were on their way to Dharamsala, where they were to be interned. A few friends of the prisoners who had accompanied

them to Mr. Irving's house were detained for a short time to give the car a fair start.

About 11.30 A.M. news of the deportation spread in the city; shops began to close and crowds to collect. A large crowd made its way to Hall Bridge, evidently in an angry and excited mood and intent on making its way to the civil lines to see Mr. Irving. It did not, however, interfere with, or show hostility to, Europeans who passed it. The crowd had not armed itself with *lathis* or sticks, and though threats of violence towards the Deputy Commissioner appear to have been uttered by individuals, they were not general. On the whole it was a spontaneous gathering, not organised and with no very definite purpose, but certainly not a mild and inoffensive demonstration of protest as was subsequently represented.

At Hall Bridge the crowd encountered the small mounted picket posted there, 4 British mounted men and 3 Indian Sowars under a British N.C.O. This picket quite correctly stopped the mob, and very soon Mr. Beckett, an assistant Commissioner, arrived and attempted to explain that it could not be allowed to pass. The crowd were within a few yards of the picket and, in spite of the efforts of Mr. Beckett, assisted by three moderate leaders, continued to press forward and forced it back, the horses becoming restive. This gave the crowd access to heaps of stones on the bridge approaches and exposed the flanks of the picket, which was heavily stoned. At this stage Mr. Irving arrived and withdrew the picket some hundred yards to get them clear and sent Mr. Beckett for reinforcements. A second mounted picket under Lieut. Dickie was sent up, followed by infantry under Lieut. Brown—the latter directed on to the

railway station, with orders to keep the crowd south of the railway line. Captain Massey had himself been up and, seeing the situation at the bridge, had given instructions for the protection of the station. Lieut. Dickie's picket, on arrival in the neighbourhood of the bridge, attempted to stop the crowd but fell back on being stoned. Mr. Irving had before this gone away to arrange with Captain Massey for further assistance, and when he left, the original picket appears to have withdrawn under a misunderstanding. While withdrawing, Dickie's picket was met by Mr. Connor, an assistant Commissioner, who was endeavouring to make his way to the police station in the city. Mr. Connor told Lieut. Dickie that he must stop the mob from reaching the civil lines at all costs, and should fire on it. Consequently two British soldiers dismounted and fired three or four shots, inflicting that number of casualties.

The shots brought the crowd to a standstill at once, but did not disperse it.

About 1 P.M., however, a body of some 24 foot police and 7 Sowars arrived under a British police officer and advanced towards the rioters with muskets, loaded with buckshot, at the ready. On seeing this, some local lawyers came forward and volunteered to take the crowd away. An opportunity to exert their influence was given to them and they succeeded in getting the crowd back across the railway. Infantry arriving at the same time re-established the defence of the railway line, although by this time huge crowds, estimated at over 30,000 people, had collected in the neighbourhood of the station, coming out of all the gates on that side of the city.

After an interval, probably less than an hour, the mob again began to press the infantry pickets now established on the railway line. All efforts of the civil officers, although they were assisted by a few of the moderate leaders, failed, and as the rioters threatened to rush the crossings, warning was given that fire would be opened.

Finally a rush, accompanied by stoning, was made and it was met by fire, with a result that some 20 more casualties were inflicted. The crowd by this time had become more violent and determined, and there is no doubt that the use of fire was absolutely essential.

While these events were in progress an even more serious situation had developed within the city, where, it will be remembered, there was only the police reserve of 75 men stationed at the Kotwali.

The outrages which were perpetrated need only be recorded in the light of their influence on British public opinion and on General Dyer's subsequent action and his estimate of dangers threatening. The exact course of events has never been quite clear, but it is certain that they occurred synchronously with, and not in consequence of, the rioting outside the city. Briefly, the mob took charge of the city and the police remained completely passive till most of the mischief had been done.

As a consequence three British bank officials were murdered in their offices and their bodies burnt in the street about two hundred yards from where the police were stationed. Another bank, still nearer and in full sight of the police station, was attacked, though fortunately its two British officials were able to take



refuge in the top of the building till the police ultimately made an effort to prevent it being burnt. The Hunter Committee commented very severely on the extraordinary inaction and lack of initiative of the police, who were under the command of two senior Indian officers.

There were other outrages which the police could not, however, have prevented. Miss Sherwood, a lady missionary, was bicycling into a school in the city when she was set on by a crowd, knocked down several times, beaten when on the ground and left for dead; subsequently she was picked up and her life saved by some Hindus, though others had refused her refuge in their houses when she was trying to escape. The crowd also broke into the Zenana Hospital and searched for Mrs. Easdon, the lady doctor in charge, till they were diverted from their object by news of loot at the banks. Two British subordinate officials were also brutally murdered in the neighbourhood of the railway goods yards.

Whatever their original attitude was, it is certain that the mob soon developed anti-European tendencies; and something like a general massacre would have occurred if the defence measures had failed. The influence of their moderate leaders was ignored and the hysterical mob was further excited by unchecked outrages committed by the hooligan element. In addition to murders, much damage was done to all buildings or institutions connected with British activities, and telegraph and telephone communications were cut. Towards the end of the day, when disturbances had spread to neighbouring villages, there was serious danger of Amritsar becoming isolated and of railway communications being destroyed.

Fortunately, reinforcements soon began to appear. The first was a windfall in the shape of 260 men of the 1/9th Gurkhas, who arrived at the railway station between 1 and 2 P.M. on their way to Peshawar. Although they were unarmed, that deficiency was easily rectified, and it was then possible to strengthen the pickets on the railway line and make the station quite secure. Another windfall took the shape of a party of native officers and men who had been attending a horse fair which was being held in the city and who, volunteering their services, were attached to the garrison of the fort.

It was not till late at night that reinforcements provided by definite orders arrived; but by early on the 11th, 225 British and 375 Indian troops drawn from Lahore and Jullundur had been added to the garrison. Major Macdonald, who came with the party from Lahore, took over military command from Captain Massey before midnight, and he was informed verbally by Mr. Kitchen, the Commissioner of the Division, who had arrived by car late in the afternoon, that the situation had passed beyond civil control and that the measures necessary to restore it had become a military responsibility.

Prior to this, about 5 P.M., a message was received from the city that all European survivors were safe in the Kotwali. This message came in time to cause the postponement of a proposal to send a party to fight their way in to ascertain the situation and rescue Europeans.

When, however, Major Macdonald assumed command, he was asked by the Commissioner to send a party into the city to get further information and to bring out the Europeans. It was expected this party

would have to fight, but in fact they found the streets empty and had no difficulty in carrying out their mission. Four Europeans were brought out.

On the 11th the situation had quietened down, although wild rumours of mutinies of troops elsewhere began to circulate. The chief cause of anxiety lay in connection with the burial of the ten Indians who had been killed in the firing on the previous day, and a deputation saw the Commissioner in the civil lines to arrange for the funerals. Restrictions imposed by the Commissioner to prevent large processions and to settle the hours and places of the funerals were not accepted by the emissaries, but they were eventually obeyed. Burials took place outside the city and processions formed within the city did not pass the gates. The emissaries, mostly truculent young lawyers, had been given a notice for general circulation that troops had been ordered to restore order, using all force necessary, that processions and gatherings were prohibited, and that gatherings would be fired on, as would also persons leaving the city in groups of more than four. Respectable people were advised to stay indoors.

During the 11th, 100 Rifles were sent to hold the Kotwali and to picket the approaches to it. Measures were also taken to prevent innocent strangers from outside entering the city while it was in a disturbed state.

In the evening the Commissioner returned to Lahore, and Brigadier-General Dyer, who commanded the Jullundur Brigade, arrived and took over control.

As subsequent events were affected almost entirely

by General Dyer's decision, it may be well at this point to form some estimate of his characteristics.

An officer with an admirable record as a fighting soldier, a leader of men with determination and initiative, he was in addition what is sometimes termed an educated soldier and a Staff College graduate. Possessing a personality marked and excitable almost to the extent of eccentricity, he was apt to hold very positive views based on opinions which he had formed for himself. He was in short one from whom energetic action might be expected and who would not often seek advice. With great confidence in his own judgment, he was prepared to act on it.

The 12th of April, the first day of General Dyer's command, passed off fairly quietly though vigorous action was initiated. Police, escorted by small parties of troops, were sent into the city and successfully carried out important arrests in connection with the riots of the 10th. Also, as crowds were collecting outside the city, General Dyer marched a strong column round it and induced the people to disperse quietly. At one point some opposition was encountered, but though the advisability of opening fire was considered, the General decided that warning by proclamation should be given before extreme action was taken. A proclamation was accordingly drawn up announcing that violence would be punished by martial law and prohibiting all meetings and gatherings. The proclamation was duly signed by a staff officer, but the records did not show the Hunter Committee what steps were taken to ensure its publication. Although Amritsar itself was again under control on the 12th, several cases of sabotage affecting railway and telegraph communications occurred dur-

ing the day in its neighbourhood, and the police had difficulty in dispersing a crowd in an outlying village. These events helped to confirm the view General Dyer was forming that a widespread conspiracy existed endangering British lives and rule, not only locally but throughout India.

On the morning of the 13th April he took further measures to warn people and to strengthen his control. Accompanied by the district magistrate, he went through the city and, collecting people by beat of drum at a number of points, had the following proclamation read out:

“It is hereby proclaimed, to all whom it may concern, that no person residing in the city is permitted or allowed to leave the city in his own or hired conveyance or on foot without a pass. No person residing in Amritsar city is permitted to leave his house after 8 P.M. Any persons found in the streets after 8 P.M. are liable to be shot. No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets of the city, or outside of it at any time. Any processions or gatherings of four men will be looked upon and treated as an unlawful assembly and dispersed by force if necessary.”

It would appear that many people did not treat the proclamation seriously, and remarks were made that “it was all bluff, that the General would not fire, and not to be afraid”.

At the time this proclamation was being read, a counter proclamation was made announcing that a meeting would be held in the afternoon at the Jallianwala Bagh, an enclosed open space within the city which was frequently used for large gatherings. The decision to hold this meeting had been arrived at the evening before.

Unfortunately, General Dyer's proclamation was read only at points all within the western half of the city, as he decided that the heat had become too trying to the escort to allow a complete circuit to be made. Still there can be little doubt that it was widely known that the proposed meeting was illegal and liable to lead to a clash with the Government authority.

After perambulating the city General Dyer returned to his headquarters and about 1 P.M. heard of the intention to hold a big meeting at the Jallianwala Bagh at 4.30 P.M. According to his own evidence, he then took some time to think out his course of action and the dispositions he should make.

By 4 o'clock, having received definite information as regards the meeting, he took personal command of the troops designed to disperse it. Marching through the city he dropped pickets at various points, retaining a special force of 65 Gurkhas, 25 Baluchis and two armoured cars to deal with the meeting. Forty of the Gurkhas were armed only with *kukris*.

On arrival at the Bagh he found a large gathering; he himself estimated it at 6000 people, but other estimates ranged from 10,000 to 20,000.

The Bagh was in no sense a public garden as its name might imply, but was simply a piece of waste ground, the greater part of whose surface lay some four feet below the normal ground level—possibly it was the remains of an old tank. The sides of the depression formed a considerable obstacle and in many parts the backs and enclosures of houses made the obstacle complete. The whole enclosure formed a *cul-de-sac* to which ways of access were few and narrow. At the end where the troops entered the

ground level was for a short distance normal, providing a sort of platform commanding the rest of the area. Leaving his armoured cars in a street outside as the approaches were too narrow to allow them to get farther, General Dyer at once deployed the 50 men of his party who were armed with rifles at each side of the entrance on the higher ground and opened fire on the crowd without warning or calling on it to disperse. The people were on the lower ground listening to an address delivered from a staging some 100 yards from the troops. Probably some of the crowd had sticks, but they made no hostile movement. Firing, independent but controlled for direction from time to time, was continued for about ten minutes and in all 1650 rounds were fired, almost exhausting the supply carried by the men.

The tragic feature of the whole affair lay in the fact that the crowd were unable to disperse rapidly when fire was opened. Panic added to the difficulties of escape which the nature of the enclosure created. Consequently the number of casualties was greatly increased and it is believed 380 is a fairly accurate estimate of the killed. When fire ceased the troops were marched away without attending to the wounded or making arrangements for their treatment.

General Dyer's explanation of his reasons for omitting to give specific warning before opening fire or allowing the gathering an opportunity to disperse was that he had already given warning by proclamation and that the meeting had been held in defiance of his orders. He claimed too that the safety of his troops called for immediate withdrawal when fire ceased.

Why fire was continued for so long is still open to

doubt. General Dyer in his evidence claimed that it was to produce an unforgettable moral effect and was deliberate. But there is reason to believe that by the time his evidence was given he had unconsciously become confused as to his motives and some of the facts. Those in close touch with the affair incline to believe that in the prevailing noise and confusion his men for a time were out of hand, and also that he considered there was some danger of attack. The truth can now never be known, but as it was on his own evidence that General Dyer was judged and as it might have established a precedent, his account will be accepted as correct.

Subsequent to these events no further collisions with Government forces occurred at Amritsar. The city was kept under martial law for some time and active steps were taken to bring the perpetrators of the outrages of the 10th of April to justice. In a few days the normal life of the city had been resumed.

The forces of disorder in Amritsar were undoubtedly cowed by General Dyer's action, but it should be noted that in other places where fierce rioting had occurred, order had already been restored by courses not comparable in any way with his.

The news of General Dyer's action, however, created a wide impression and soon gave rise to controversy the echoes of which have not yet died down.

On the one side he was condemned as a murderer and a brutal soldier, and on the other he was hailed as the saviour of India from a second mutiny; and it was argued that the sacrifice of life entailed by his action was as nothing compared to the slaughter on both sides that would have followed from another mutiny. Strictly speaking, soldiers need consider only



how far, if at all, General Dyer violated the principles which should guide officers in similar circumstances: but it is of interest and instructive to attempt to analyse the motives of his action and mental processes.

Before the Committee of Investigation General Dyer gave his evidence frankly and made no attempt to excuse his action. He made it quite clear that he considered that the meeting was held at the Jallinawala Bagh in deliberate defiance of Government, and after due warning of the consequences of such defiance had been given. Moreover, that he had formed the opinion from events in other parts of India and from the acts of sabotage occurring in the districts surrounding, that an organised conspiracy to upset Government by violence was on foot which endangered all Europeans and that the outrages of the 10th could not be looked on as merely the result of local riots. That he had deliberately and after full consideration gone to the meeting with the intention of firing without further warning, not solely with the object of dispersing the meeting but in order to take the opportunity, presented by the deliberate defiance of his orders, to inflict such punishment as would have far-reaching effect and show that the Government was prepared to meet force with force and to demonstrate the consequences.

There can be little doubt that General Dyer had formed an extreme and positive opinion on the general situation and that his action was the result of his views on the general rather than the necessities of the immediate local situation. It is characteristic of the man that his action appears to have been guided

by his individual views, and it would seem that he consulted no other opinion.

It is fair to admit, however, that large parts of India were actually in a highly inflammable condition and that many well qualified to judge shared his views on the dangers of the situation and held that repetition of atrocities such as those that had been committed at Amritsar could be checked only by mass punishment of the most drastic nature.

Although his general intention is clear, it is open to doubt how far he meant to carry his action to the extremes he actually did. It did not come out in his evidence, but it has since been stated on good authority that General Dyer was horrified when he discovered subsequently that the crowd were practically unable to disperse when he opened fire. If this is so it is quite possible that at the moment he may have thought the failure of the crowd to disperse rapidly was due to a continued attitude of defiance.

There is general agreement that General Dyer's evidence was given perfectly honestly, but it must be remembered that it was given after a considerable lapse of time during which his attitude must have been subconsciously influenced by the controversy which raged. The support given to him, coupled with the attacks made by extremists on the other side, tended to exalt General Dyer into a heroic position which cannot have been without its effect on the latent element of vanity which exists in everyone. There is some reason to think that in consequence his evidence may have exaggerated the ruthlessness of his attitude and the deliberateness of his action.

It must always be a matter of regret that the whole incident was not investigated by an impartial tribunal.

The Hunter Committee contained members avowedly hostile, and in many respects the investigation degenerated into the trial of a prisoner unprotected by the safeguards of formal legal procedure. Many of the questions put to him would hardly have been allowed in a court of law. For example, the hypothetical question put to General Dyer whether, if he had been able to bring his armoured cars into the enclosure, he would have used machine-gun fire was evidently designed to induce him to further incriminate himself. Unfortunately, he did not refuse to answer the question and his reply in the affirmative strengthened the hostility to him. Characteristically, General Dyer, although permitted and pressed to employ legal assistance, refused to take this obviously desirable precaution.

Before commenting on the lessons to be drawn from the whole episode at Amritsar, one further incident which occurred after the situation was well under control may be mentioned, as it did much to increase the bitterness engendered. In the course of measures taken to bring to justice those who had been concerned in the attack on Miss Sherwood, General Dyer caused a triangle to be erected at the spot where she fell, with the intention of publicly flogging there those guilty of taking part in the assault. He also placed two pickets in the street with orders that no Indian was to be permitted to pass between the points at which they were posted, and in giving his instructions added that if Indians had to pass they must go on "all fours". General Dyer's intention was to deny the street to public use, but unfortunately for several reasons the order was interpreted literally and gave rise to what became known as the crawling incident.

Police escorting prisoners through the streets made them go down on "all fours". More unluckily still, certain houses opening on to the prohibited section of the street had no back entrance and the occupants had to undergo the indignity when they went out on their ordinary business, although they were not suspected of being concerned in the outrages or of taking part in the rioting. When the order had been in effect for about a week it was brought to notice, and cancelled by order of the Punjab Government.

In India the civil government relies to such an extent on military support that it is difficult at times to distinguish where the responsibility of one begins and the other ends, and there must be the closest co-ordination of plans and action. It is, therefore, well to consider the course of events at Amritsar from the outset when responsibility for decision was still vested in the civil authority. The following points strike one:

It is clear from his letter to the Punjab Government that Mr. Irving had an accurate appreciation of the situation at Amritsar, not only of the danger of disturbances but also of the fact that in the event of a serious outbreak the forces at his disposal would necessarily have to adopt a purely defensive attitude and that the greater part of the city must pass out of control.

The problem he had to deal with was threefold:

- (a) To effect the arrests of the leaders with the minimum chance of interference, and to provide, in case of subsequent disturbances, for:
- (b) The safety of the European lines.
- (c) The maintenance of control within the city and

protection of the Government offices in it and the railway station.

In view of the acceptance of his appreciation by the Punjab Government, there appears to have been some lack of co-ordination between the decision to arrest the leaders and the decision to reinforce the garrison. To arrest the leaders before the arrangements for reinforcement had been fully matured was like poking a stick into a wasps' nest before taking steps to stupefy the insects.

Riot is at all times endemic in India, but there were indications that an epidemic had broken out. Something more than the application of the local defence scheme appeared necessary, especially in view of the *rapprochement* between the various communities and the proved lack of influence of their more moderate leaders. Jullundur and Lahore were not far off and communications were good. It would be interesting to know if the military authorities at those stations were notified of the impending arrests or warned to have reinforcements standing by as a reasonable precaution. The actual timing and arrangements for the arrests seem to have been decided locally.

The military side of the local defence scheme was evidently designed, as must be the first consideration in India, for the protection of the European community and railway communications, and as Mr. Irving considered that the garrison was barely adequate for that task, this probably explains why no steps were taken to provide a backing of troops for the police force within the city.

The role assigned to the mounted troops of the garrison is curious. Why were they employed to picket

the railway crossings? Surely a task for infantry. Mounted troops of any nature as a mobile reserve and to disperse a mob would have been valuable, but to expect a few horses, untrained to the police work, to face a mob passively is asking much from them and they not unnaturally became encumbrances rather than of assistance. A few mounted orderlies attached to infantry pickets might also have saved the necessity of the civil officials having to leave threatened points at critical moments in order to obtain assistance.

The inaction of the police reserve inside the city has been ascribed to the age and lack of initiative of its Indian commanders. The unarmed police seem to have vanished at an early stage, but that seventy armed men should have made no attempt to control rioting immediately under their eyes or to have prevented the burning of the Town Hall and Post Office buildings, which actually abutted on to the police station, exalts lack of initiative to an incredible pitch. No disloyalty was insinuated in the report of the Hunter Committee, and when the police finally took action they behaved well. In view of the commonly alleged lack of initiative among Indian officers in a crisis, it is somewhat surprising that no British official was placed with them, though three were in charge of the situation on the railway. Mr. Connor's attempt to get into the city was obviously belated.

It is not clear what instructions had been issued to this body of police; they are termed a police reserve—presumably a reserve to support the unarmed police; but the term rather implies the intention of issuing orders according to the development of the situation and may have been a reason for inaction. It would have been easy to fritter away the small force in an

attempt to maintain control over the whole city, and Mr. Irving evidently hoped only to maintain order and keep communication open in the northern part of the city. This may have been well understood, but the impression left is of an absence of clear instructions. That, of course, is no excuse for the lack of initiative shown when communications were cut and there was an obvious and urgent need of intervention.

The best excuse for the police officers is that they were confronted with a situation which could probably not have been dealt with without firing and that the custom forbade the use of fire without the authority of a British officer.

The isolation of the purely Indian police force in a position where the exercise of control was especially called for must, however, be looked on as a weak point in the dispositions, even making due allowance for wisdom after the event and lack of knowledge of all the local conditions.

To turn now to later events.

The problem General Dyer had to deal with when he took over command was to prevent further disorder, to bring the guilty to justice and to restore normal civil control within the area of his command. He was well on his way to a solution when unfortunately he decided to enlarge the scope of the problem to include what lay outside his province.

The main questions which arise are:

(a) Was General Dyer justified in opening fire at the Jallianwala Bagh without giving specific warning to the crowd in addition to the general warning conveyed by his proclamation? In principle, he was not. Fire without specific warning is only justified when

the mob is actively endangering life or property. Even when actively defying authority, as occurred previously in the attempt to force the railway crossings, they should if possible be warned before fire is opened.

(b) Was he justified in continuing to fire when the crowd was attempting to disperse?

Clearly prolonged firing violated the principle that the minimum amount of force only should be used. There is, however, the possibility that General Dyer misunderstood the attitude of the crowd owing to the difficulty of dispersion, although his evidence did not suggest that he feared attack.

(c) Was the motive which General Dyer claimed in his evidence inspired his action, that is of inflicting a lesson which would affect the situation in the whole Punjab, perhaps through all India, a legitimate reason for violating the ordinary well-recognised principle? It clearly was not. His business in the absence of other orders was to deal with the situation of which he had been placed in charge. It would produce an impossible state of affairs if every subordinate officer adopted a similar attitude. The ground would be cut from under the feet of higher authority and any consistent policy would be out of the question. Quite apart from divergence of individual opinion, the amount of information obtainable by subordinate officers must be limited. If exceptionally drastic action is necessary to produce a widespread impression, then higher authority must order it. Subordinates cannot be allowed to dictate policy. Acceptance of General Dyer's motives as a justification for his action would have established a precedent not merely



dangerous but one which would have enormously increased the burden of responsibility on subordinate officers in the future.

It would appear that General Dyer's motives were based on his own judgment of the situation and not on the consensus of opinion of those round him. In this he appears to have departed from the general rule that the military commander called in to replace the civil power should make the utmost use of the knowledge and judgment of the civil authority he replaces. Decisions must rest with him, but consultation and co-operation are necessary to provide the data on which decisions are based. Firm measures to restore order are essential, but the situation must be desperate indeed before drastic punitive action can justifiably be initiated on the judgment of a single individual.

The "Crawling Order" for which General Dyer was held responsible was apparently due to the misapplication of a hasty remark of his, added as a rider to his original order. At the same period, however, at other places certain "fancy punishments" (as they were called by the Hunter Committee) were instituted or employed by junior officers. Most of such punishments were designed to cause humiliation and had the effect of leaving much bitterness behind them. For that reason "fancy punishments" are undesirable expedients; at best they can only be justified by success and when carefully devised to meet a real need. Experience has shown that if employed at all, as may sometimes be necessary to avoid arresting and imprisoning unwieldy numbers, they should be clearly defined by responsible authority and recorded when imposed. In the all-important interests of discip-

line their invention and infliction by subordinates, however trivial the punishments in themselves may be, must be strictly prohibited.

The Amritsar episode as a whole will always be remembered as one which gave rise to most intense and widespread propaganda and one which left an exceptional aftermath of bitterness both from the nature of the outrages committed and from the methods applied in restoring order.

Probably as a result of the controversy and the claims put forward in support of General Dyer's action, a deep impression was made on the minds of many officers. It was, and perhaps still is, widely felt that an officer who takes strong action which he genuinely considers is necessitated by the circumstances cannot rely on the support of the Government, and that his career will be ruined. The composition of the Committee which investigated the circumstances, and the manner in which General Dyer was examined, did much to deepen this unfortunate impression. It is hoped that it has been made clear that he did depart from well-recognised principles to an extent which made it impossible for the Government to support and approve what he had done. He had acted on his own judgment and responsibility—not in accordance with orders subsequently disowned. He had therefore to stand or fall by his decision, and could not expect the responsibility for his decision to be shared by others. That he acted from the highest motives and not through callousness or momentary panic is generally agreed, but there can be little doubt that his judgment was at fault. The actual penalties inflicted on him were no more severe than those to which an officer convicted of lack of judgment in

carrying out important military duties is at all times exposed. There is nothing in the case which should make an officer hesitate to act with necessary firmness within the limitations imposed by principles which have become traditional in the Army.

## CHAPTER IV

### EGYPT, 1919

THE widespread outbreak of disorder in Egypt in March 1919 came as a disappointment to people in England who had hoped that the establishment of a definite protectorate over the country would do much to eliminate the unrest which prevailed in it during the decade preceding the war. The curiously indefinite terms on which British occupation had continued for so many years had appeared to encourage intrigue and aspirations aimed at getting rid of foreign control. But with Egypt as an integral part of the Empire, control would cease to be, in the same sense, foreign, and its gradual relaxation, giving the Egyptians by degrees a greater measure of self-government, could now more easily be effected. There would no longer be the danger of another Power stepping in to assume a position abandoned by Britain.

Two causes contributed to the outbreak. First, the circumstances under which the protectorate had been declared, coupled with the concessions made to the racial ideals of small nations in post-war settlements, awakened the ambition of the Nationalist Party in Egypt, and gave rise to a violent agitation for complete independence among the politically minded classes. Secondly, the Fellahin, to whom independence meant little or nothing, were nursing grievances against British rule arising from measures taken during the war, and were in consequence

ready to listen to the propaganda of the Nationalist Party.

As regards the first of these causes, it may be admitted that the declaration of the protectorate in December 1914 was to some extent a war measure, necessary to define the position of the Egyptians and the nature of the British occupation of the country during the course of the war. An acknowledgment of Egypt's independence of Turkey would have enabled her to adopt an attitude of neutrality, compromising the position of belligerent troops in the country; while to have allowed Turkish suzerainty to continue would have placed the Egyptians in an equally false position as enemy subjects. Nevertheless, England had no intention of treating the protectorate as a temporary expedient, but meant it as a final definition of her status in Egypt. The terms of the proclamation of the protectorate made this clear:

“His Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gives notice that in view of the state of war arising out of the action of Turkey, Egypt is placed under the protection of His Majesty; and will henceforth constitute a British protectorate.

“The suzerainty of Turkey over Egypt is thus terminated, and His Majesty's Government will adopt all measures necessary for the defence of Egypt, and protect its inhabitants and interests.”

The Egyptian Nationalists, on the other hand, claimed that the protectorate was purely a device to relieve an anomalous situation during the war, and this claim, perhaps naturally, was pressed with increasing vigour when it was seen that other races released from Turkish domination would receive

recognition as independent nations in the final settlement after the war.

The proclamation of the protectorate was accompanied by an assurance that Britain took upon herself "the sole burden of the present war without calling on the Egyptian people for aid therein", and this lent some colour to the contention that the protectorate was of a temporary nature. Moreover, as the assurance was not, owing to the exigencies of the war, fully honoured, it did little to render the protectorate acceptable to the masses of the people. It will be remembered that Egypt, though her contribution of combatant troops was limited to the loan of four battalions of the Egyptian Army in the later stages of the fighting in Palestine, supplied labour corps in large numbers which were exposed to, and suffered casualties from, the risks of war. Heavy requisitions were also made from the people for transport animals, food and forage. It was not, however, chiefly resentment of exposure to danger that gave rise to the second cause of unrest in the country and was responsible for the readiness of the fellahin to listen to the agitators of the Nationalist Party. Provided he is well paid, the fellah is prepared to accept risks. His grievances arose chiefly from the failure to keep promises made to him when his labour and property were requisitioned. When he was enlisted in a labour corps for a definite period and was not returned punctually at its termination, or when he found that the time he was kept waiting for a ship was not included in the term of his engagement, he was filled with resentment. His heart was set on getting back to his land (to which his devotion is fanatical), and when the promised day of his release passed he became hopeless and

aggrieved. Again, a promise was made that after the war he would be given an opportunity of buying back at a cheap rate camels and donkeys requisitioned from him, but they were often sold off in Palestine to save the expense of returning them to Egypt. Nor did the fellah always receive all the money due to him. Labour, produce and animals had generally to be requisitioned through village headmen or other local officials, and there was not a sufficient supply of British officers to ensure that requisitions were fairly distributed or payment made individually. Money was often extorted from those who could afford to buy themselves off, with a consequence that too large a proportion of the demands was made on the poorest men.

The village authorities naturally attempted to shift the odium on to British shoulders, and a story which rings true is told of a village Omdah who devised an ingenious plan of earning merit and cash for himself at the expense of British reputation. He gave out that the British recruiting sergeant demanded fifty piastres from every man enlisted, but that the sergeant had agreed to accept thirty piastres if the Omdah would collect the money and pay it in a lump sum. The sergeant naturally got nothing but curses while the Omdah was blessed and kept the money. For such causes and others connected with the rise in the cost of living at the beginning of 1919, discontent was rife among the masses; and though no doubt in time, as good and sympathetic government was re-established, grievances would have been forgotten, political agitation for independence became acute before discontent and the anti-British feeling it gave rise to could die down.

The immediate signal for the intensification of agitation was the somewhat brusque refusal to allow a deputation of the Nationalists, headed by Zaghlul Pasha, to proceed to England to urge Egypt's claims to treatment similar to that received by Arabia, Palestine and Mesopotamia on the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. But the spark which caused the conflagration was the arrest and deportation, on 8th March, of Zaghlul and other instigators of the agitation.

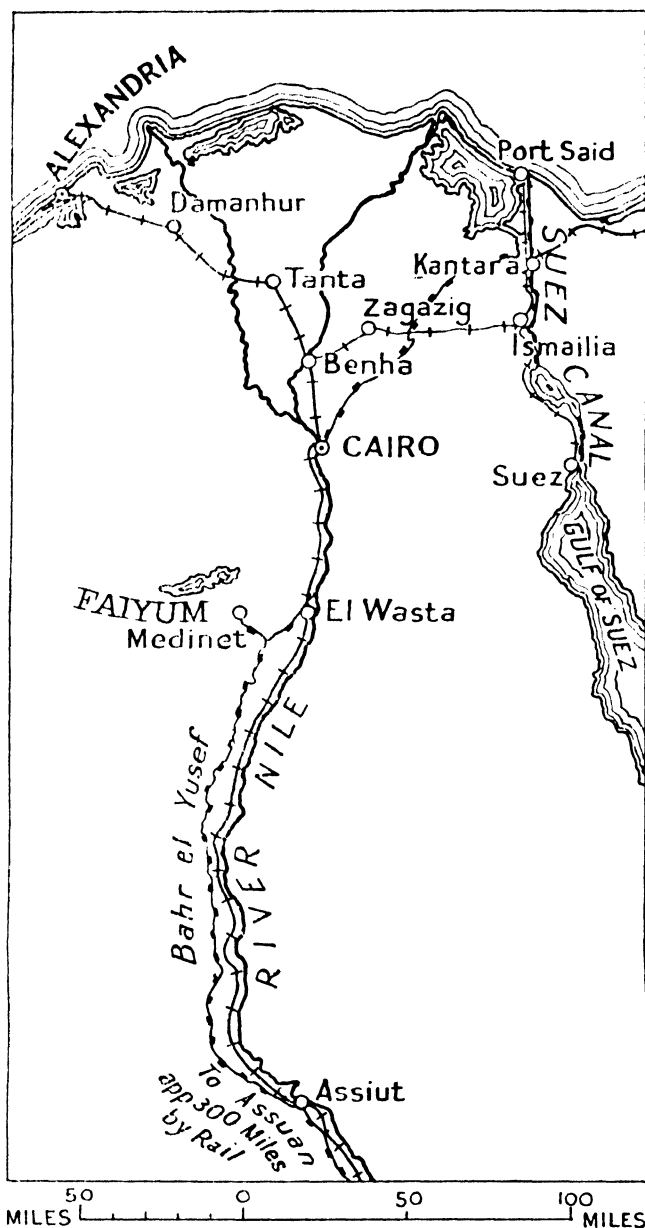
As usual, the students caught fire first, and as soon as the news of the arrests reached them they deserted their desks and urged the people to violence. By the evening of the 9th, cases of sabotage and destruction of property began, and on the 10th the military were called to assist the police. The situation rapidly became worse: officials deserted their posts, rioting spread to the provinces, and the lives of foreigners, especially British, in isolated localities, were in grave danger. The nature of the outbreak will best be understood if a few outstanding incidents are mentioned here, although some of them occurred after the measures taken to restore order, which will be described later, were well in train.

The first riot resulting in serious loss of life occurred at Tanta on 12th March, to be followed by another on the 16th at Damanhur, some twelve rioters being killed in each case. Both these are important towns on the main Cairo-Alexandria Railway.

On 17th March disorder in the Fayum became acute, and an encounter took place near Medinet between Bedouins and Egyptian police. These had to be reinforced by light armoured cars before the Bedouins fled. On the following day Bedouins and



## EGYPT



other rabble armed with guns and knives, in a mob estimated as 4000 strong, attacked the railway station at Medinet and also two houses in which some 200 Europeans had collected. The mob was, however, successfully counter-attacked and driven off with heavy casualties by some 150 men of the 46th Punjabis who had been sent to garrison the town.

On 18th March eight British and Dominion officers were murdered, in circumstances of particular brutality, when they were travelling unarmed by the railway from Assiut to Cairo. The attack was undoubtedly deliberately planned, but that the men who actually committed the atrocity had been worked up to it by propaganda which they did not understand is evident; for it is known that they attacked the officers with shouts of "give us independence", as if it were something concrete concealed on the persons of their victims.

On 23rd March an organised attack was made, by a large mob armed in part with rifles, on a party of Europeans marooned at Assiut. Here again a detachment of the 46th Punjabis saved the situation, beating off the attack and overcoming an attempted outbreak in the native prison. The arrival of a relief column on its way to Assuan, and some air action, prevented renewal of the attacks.

In other places the insurrectionary movement took a less violent form, but attempts were made to set up local Soviets in the name of the "Free Egyptian Government". These Soviets announced that they were prepared to maintain order, and carry on government, provided no British troops approached; and in some cases they began to collect taxes.

These various outbreaks were, of course, additional

to the widespread symptoms of disorder, such as sabotage committed by small parties, and general flouting of authority and disobedience of orders. They represented the more extreme cases, where the mob or local leaders got beyond control and indicated what was likely to occur with increasing frequency if control was not quickly re-established.

How far the outbreak was the result of a definitely planned attempt to upset British rule is uncertain. If it was, the plan matured prematurely in consequence of political events before the country was denuded of troops. It is more probable that the outbreak took a violent form beyond the expectations of the political agitators and beyond their power to control it owing to the prevailing discontent. Fortunately when the outbreak started, in Lower Egypt there were still large numbers of troops, Indian, Dominion and British; though, as demobilisation was in progress, both their organisation and equipment were in a somewhat chaotic condition and special measures were required to re-equip and reorganise units for duty. Farther south there were in Upper Egypt some small detachments on the line of communication to the Sudan, and in the Sudan itself there were still some Indian troops.

In Lower Egypt the greater portion of the troops were in the Canal zone from Ismailia to Port Said, and there conditions were consequently quiet. The garrisons of Cairo and Alexandria were also strong, and guaranteed the safety of the foreign population in spite of riots, but railway communications between those places and to Ismailia were vulnerable and for a time almost completely interrupted by acts of sabotage. Collisions between detachments of troops

and rioters occurred at several of the main stations on the lines, and it may be said that the whole of the Delta province, except where there were detachments of troops, was completely out of control, the large town of Tanta being perhaps the centre of disorder.

Such was the situation General Bulfin was called on to meet when, on 12th March, Lord Allenby's departure for Paris left him at Beirut temporarily in command of the British Army in Palestine and Egypt.

Reports from Egypt indicated coming danger and he set out at once from Palestine to the scene of the trouble, arriving on the morning of 16th March. His journey was actually interrupted between the Suez Canal and Cairo, as, on reaching Mina-el-Qamh about noon, he learnt that, less than two hours before, that station had been rushed by a mob of some 3000 men, armed with knives, hatchets and stones, who attempted to set fire to the station. The mob had been dispersed by a party of fifty Australian dismounted cavalry who had arrived by an earlier train, but not until it had been necessary to open fire. The Australians had two men severely wounded and the mob suffered some fifty casualties.

Proceeding farther, General Bulfin found that the railway and telegraph lines had been cut, and to enable him to complete his journey it was necessary to order an aeroplane from Ismailia to fly to Cairo to procure a motor and an escort of armoured cars. These experiences must have given General Bulfin an appreciation of the violent temper of the people, and on arrival in Cairo, in consultation with General Watson, commanding the troops in Egypt, he at once formulated his plans.

There were two main dangers to be dealt with.

On the one hand there were indications that the rioters were acting with the definite idea of isolating Cairo by cutting all telegraph and railway lines leading into it. The effect of this would be to cause, as was probably intended, a critical food situation, for Cairo receives its grain, oil and supplies mainly from Alexandria, and to a lesser degree from Port Said, while its meat comes from Southern Egypt and the Sudan.

The Nationalist leaders no doubt counted on food riots occurring in Cairo which the Government would find great difficulty in suppressing, as hungry men do not listen to reason and will face dangers when in search for food from which normally they would shrink.

The other danger lay at outlying stations where garrisons were weak or non-existent. The situation at Assiut, Luxor and Assuan in Upper Egypt was especially critical.

When these immediate dangers had been met, there remained the further task of restoring order throughout the country. As usual, measures to make the situation secure, followed by counter measures to restore normal conditions, were required.

General Bulfin's plan fell into four phases. First, to restore immediately communications between Cairo and Alexandria by securing, guarding and repairing the railway. Simultaneously, collecting river boats, he intended to despatch a small column, under Brigadier General Huddleston, by water to Assuan to evacuate the families of European officials and bring them to Cairo under escort. Secondly, the railway to Port Said was to be reopened; and thirdly, the line to the south. Finally, when railway communications had been re-

established, he proposed to move out eighteen flying columns to clear the country in the neighbourhood of the main railway lines, restoring order and re-establishing civil government.

Superimposed on this general plan, which had as its primary object the re-establishment and maintenance of communications, early steps were required to secure control over the Fayum. The Fayum is a curious area some 7500 square miles in extent, lying thirty-five miles south-south-west of Cairo. In some respects it is in the nature of a large oasis, inasmuch as it is separated from the Nile valley by a strip of desert; but it is not a true oasis, as it is permanently irrigated with Nile water by the Yusufi Canal. Over 1100 square miles of the area is cultivated land and there are several large towns and villages, Medinet, the chief town, containing over 37,000 inhabitants. The total population of the area amounts to nearly half a million, of whom some 60,000 are Bedouins. The Fayum is connected with the main Southern Railway line by a branch line from Wasta, on the Nile fifty miles south of Cairo; but it lies so much off the main railway system, and is so important a district, that it required separate and early treatment. The situation there, which developed into the incidents already described, was menacing, and the Bedouin population especially were giving trouble. Columns were accordingly concentrated at Wasta by road, rail and water with a view to this special operation.

Although disorder was in general confined to the large towns and agricultural areas, General Bulfin had to consider the danger of a fanatical outbreak among the Bedouins; and to watch their movements he placed bombing squadrons of the Royal Air Force

at the strategic centres, Ismailia, Amiriya (S.W. of Alexandria), Cairo and Wasta.

To carry out this far-reaching plan it was evident that large numbers of troops would be required. The men were there, but many had handed in their arms and equipment and were scattered in the demobilisation centres.

Mounted troops were especially needed for the projected operations, but it was not so easy to bring men and horses together. In units, which had begun to demobilise, horses might be in one camp, men in a second, and saddlery in a third. Even when units had been re-assembled and equipped, broken railway lines necessitated considerable marches to bring them to where they were required. Time was clearly needed to get the plan into full operation, its length depending on the progress made with the re-establishment of communications.

The check in the arrangements for demobilisation must have come as a heavy blow to troops anxious to get home; and it would not have been surprising if they had shown temper in dealing with the people who were the cause of the delay. The war-time soldier, however, accepted the situation with all the philosophy and good temper which one has learnt to expect from his professional prototype. The Egyptians were not made to suffer and orders were loyally carried out. It is true that a proposal to increase the number of mounted troops, by turning heavy artillery-men into improvised cavalry, had to be abandoned; the men, though quite willing to be employed so long as they walked, protesting that they had not learnt to ride, and expressing unwillingness to face a new risk for

which they had not been trained. This, however, was a minor incident, and an objection sufficiently understandable to be received with some sympathy and amusement.

While waiting for his arrangements to take shape, General Bulfin attempted to persuade the Egyptian ex-Ministers and leaders of the Nationalists to use their influence to calm the people. In this he had little or no success, for although the leaders had begun to realise the harm they had done, and the extent of the risks to which they had exposed many innocent people, yet they had not the moral courage to alter their attitude materially. Even a proclamation which they drafted, and proposed should be dropped by aeroplane in towns and villages, was more in the nature of propaganda than a sincere appeal for the restoration of order.

The preliminary measures which had been taken to ensure the security of threatened points worked out according to plan.

The small detachment of Punjabis in the Fayum inflicted a severe defeat on the rebels; Brigadier-General Huddleston's river column gave timely assistance at Assiut, where on the 27th March he also got in touch with troops sent north from the Sudan; communications from Cairo, to Alexandria and the Canal zone, were made safe and Cairo itself soon regained its normal condition.

There remained still the final task of re-establishing civil government throughout the country and of making such a display of force as would bring conviction that conflict with the Government was hopeless. Pending the return of Lord Allenby on 25th March, General Bulfin had elaborated his scheme for effect-



ing this, and Lord Allenby approved it on his arrival. The plan provided for the subdivision of the country into seven areas, each under the command of a general officer who would be given sufficient troops to bring to punishment those concerned in the disorders and to re-establish civil control.

In the case of Lower Egypt columns of troops were sent to the larger towns. Using these as bases, small mobile detachments, accompanied by a political officer and a party of police, were pushed out to make tours lasting three or four days. Their orders were to show themselves over as large an area as possible; visiting villages, interviewing their Omdahs, and holding summary courts; all arrests being carried out by the police. The troops lived as far as possible on the country and their passage was marked by the re-establishment of civil authority.

In the case of Cairo, Alexandria and the Canal towns, measures taken were more definitely protective. In the two former the maintenance of order was entrusted to the police, reinforced by military parties in reserve at the police stations and finding pickets on some of the principal routes. Outside the towns troops were stationed at vital points and in villages where disturbances had occurred, constant patrolling was maintained.

In the towns on the Canal military protection was given to the European quarters and to the various points of primary importance, such as dock entrances, water-works and electric light and power stations.

The Fayum, and the country between Wasta and Cairo, were treated in much the same manner as Lower Egypt; though, owing to the nature of the

communications, bases for operations were successively, instead of simultaneously, occupied.

On 5th April the operation of clearing up along the line of the Southern Railway commenced. Major-General Sir J. Shea, with a strong mobile column consisting of a regiment of cavalry, a brigade of infantry and other attached units, moved south from Wasta and reached Assiut on the 11th, arresting and trying rebels and re-establishing civil government as he went.

In less than a month from the commencement of the outbreak it may be said that order had been completely restored throughout Egypt, and civil government was again able to exercise its functions.

With the exception of those cases in which a definite attack which had to be repelled was made, there was little loss of life. No steps in the nature of vindictive or oppressive punitive measures were taken, and the troops showed admirable restraint. Their conduct furthered the clear-cut policy which was adopted of avoiding anything likely to leave a permanent feeling of bitterness among the people. Firm rapid action and the presence of an adequate number of troops had made these results possible.

The troubles that were still to come in Egypt arose from political vacillation and were brought about by the Nationalist Party and their following among the youth of the country, who came under Nationalist influence in educational establishments, rather than by the mass of the people.

This chapter has shown a war-time army suddenly diverted to police duties. Yet the principles which

guide our normal peace-time army, when it is called on to re-establish order, held good in almost every respect.

Although martial law was still in force, there was no high-handed action or quick resort to shooting, which might have been expected from troops accustomed to the battle-field and still carrying ammunition as normal procedure. Under the conditions existing there was a real danger of troops resorting to unauthorised reprisals, as soldiers had been murdered, and it was almost impossible to identify the murderers. Not only may reprisals lead to destruction of lives and property of the innocent; they are a highly infectious form of indiscipline and to avoid this calls for watchfulness and tact in handling troops. In extreme cases it may be necessary to order something in the nature of reprisals, to avoid the danger of the men taking the law into their own hands, with consequent excesses. An incident which was currently believed, though its historical accuracy cannot be vouched for, may be quoted as an example of the extreme cases which may require handling.

A soldier of a Dominion detachment was murdered, and as there was no chance of bringing the guilty to justice the other men were determined to take their revenge on the village implicated. Knowing that his men were set on obtaining satisfaction, the officer in charge accepted the responsibility of taking a course which, while in the nature of a compromise, avoided the danger of serious excesses. His action took the form of rounding up the village and administering a flogging to all its male inhabitants of a responsible age.

Rough justice of this sort may have occasionally

been used, but, on the whole, such cases, even if they occurred, were exceptional and the principles of avoiding unnecessary use of force and of all action likely to cause permanent bitterness were carefully observed. In dealings with the people the fullest use was made of civil authorities and of the police; and the aim of restoring civil control as quickly as possible, and as opportunities offered, was adhered to.

When our Army is at its peace strength and widespread disorder occurs, it is generally impossible to make a sufficient number of troops available to deal with all areas affected simultaneously. Consequently, areas must be treated successively and there is always a danger of fresh outbreaks as troops are withdrawn, or in areas not yet taken in hand. This necessitates the retention of a strong reserve which further reduces the force actively employed in restoring order. The fact that General Bulfin was not short of men enabled him to take simultaneous action all over the country and also to dispense with a strong central reserve; though no doubt in each area the responsible commander saw to it that he had an adequate local reserve.

Except in so far as he was able, through the strength of his force, to operate simultaneously in the various areas into which he had divided the country, General Bulfin's plans followed normal lines. Security first, followed by firm and rapid counter action.

The Army, especially officers of the Staff and Departmental services, may well take note of the extent to which war-time grievances were responsible for the extent of disaffection which existed in Egypt. Officers in charge of labour, and other units of a similar nature, working with the Army should realise that they are no less responsible for looking

after the interests of their men than for getting work out of them; to the same extent, in fact, as officers of combatant units. Where it was possible to find officers with a knowledge of and sympathy for Egyptians employed, work was better done, and generally some way of avoiding, or making amends for, breaches of promises could be found.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MOPLAH REBELLION, 1921

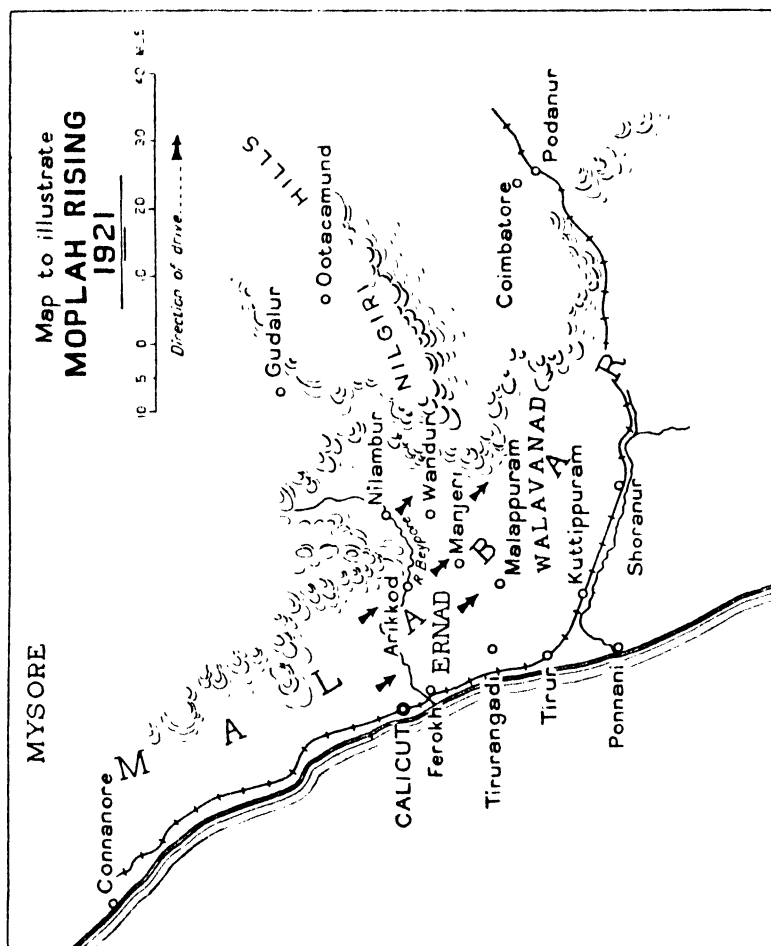
THE telegraphic correspondence dealing with the Moplah rising was published for the information of Parliament. The first telegram in the series runs:

*From Viceroy, 22nd August 1921*

“Following from Madras has been received:

“District Magistrate at Malabar, in making arrests under Moplah Outrages Act of dangerous leaders, was assisted by troops and police, who have been heavily attacked at Tirurangadi by armed bodies of Moplahs, Up to the present reported casualties are: An officer of the Leinster Regt., and an assistant Superintendent of the Police and two constables missing. Post offices at Parapandi and Tanur attacked and looted, also railway stations at Parapandi and Kadalundi. Arrangements to send reinforcements made with General Officer Commanding. Apparently detachment of Leinster Regt. at Malapuram are on defensive with communications cut, also troops and police at Tirurangadi.”

The next telegram, two days later, gives further communications from Madras announcing the safe withdrawal of the Tirurangadi detachment to Calicut; interruption of telegraphic, railway and road communications; a critical position at Calicut; steps taken to secure naval and military assistance; and that the District Magistrate in Malabar had reported that



“situation is beyond civil control and asks that the military should therefore now take charge”. The Madras Government states that, “the reports received satisfy us that there is a state of open rebellion, and that in the Ponnani, Walluvanad and Ernad taluks Martial Law should be established. We consider the conditions now correspond to the state of affairs described in Martial Law Manual and that regular measures should be taken as contemplated in that Manual. We accordingly suggest that Governor-General introduces Martial Law by ordinance.”

These telegrams give a pretty good idea of the circumstances in which the military authorities find the “baby” suddenly passed to them.

Let us examine the nature of the “baby”; in this case a distinctly obstreperous child.

Malabar is a district on the coast of the Madras Presidency lying between the western slopes of the Mysore plateau and Nilgiri Hills and the sea, well off the track of the average soldier serving in India. Along the coast there is a narrow strip of sandy plain, but inland the country rises to the east in successive steps of low hills, interspersed with paddy flats fringed with coconut gardens, till the spurs and deep ravines of the main escarpment are reached on the eastern borders of the district. Here the jungle and forests become dense and the country difficult; in most parts uninhabited. The rainfall is very heavy as the mountains, which average 5000 feet on the eastern boundary and rise in places to over 8000 feet, catch the South-West Monsoon.

In general, then, the physical conditions made it an exceedingly difficult arena in which to wage guerrilla



warfare, providing ample cover and numerous places of refuge for rebel bands. The climate, very hot and stuffy, was at its worst when the rebellion broke out, and heavy rains, amounting at times to ten inches a day, added to the difficulties and discomforts of the Government troops. Being a backward area, roads were for the most part little more than country tracks adapted only to the normal requirements of the people, with a consequence that bridges could not be relied on to bear even light lorries, much less armoured cars, a factor which gave rise to many difficulties in planning surprise movements, and necessitated careful reconnaissance or very reliable intelligence concerning routes to be followed.

The Malabar district is divided into nine taluks, of which Ernad and Wallavanad in Southern Malabar, to the east and south-east of the port of Calicut, chiefly, concern us. These two taluks have always been seats of Moplah disturbance. Ernad especially, to the east of Calicut, is a hot-bed of fanaticism; more than half its population are Moplahs and the country is wild, difficult, and towards its eastern limits practically unsurveyed and uninhabited.

Out of a population of a little over three million in the district, nearly one million are Mahomedans; and these are practically all "Mapillas" or Moplahs, a people which owes its origin to Arab traders and sailors taking to themselves women of the country, presumably on a temporary basis in most cases, as the name "Mapilla", signifying "mother's son", seems to indicate. Malabar has an ancient and important commercial connection with Mesopotamia and other countries in the west, largely based on its production of pepper; a commodity which has always commanded

a high price in proportion to its bulk, and therefore attracted Arab traders distinguished for their adventurous seamanship. Naturally the native potentates did all in their power to encourage these traders, and, as a permanent community came into existence, low-caste Hindus saw in conversion to Mahomedanism an escape from caste restrictions. Converts were welcomed and the new community increased rapidly, partly through this cause and partly due to the virility of the Arab stock. Owing to their origin the Moplahs are of varying racial type; near the coasts signs of Arab ancestry are more apparent, whereas inland many appear to be of nearly pure Indian descent. All, however, both in their manner of dress and characteristics, are easily distinguishable from the Hindu population.

The Moplahs are described to be as a rule frugal, industrious and enterprising. They excel the ordinary Hindu in heavy manual labour and become efficient in crafts requiring both strength and skill. They take readily to trade and most of the trade of Malabar is conducted by them. Still, the great majority of the Moplahs are poor. In the interior of the country they are cultivators either working on the estates of large landowners, or on leaseholds, where they do much pioneering work, bringing more land under cultivation from the jungle. As, however, the customs of inheritance provide for distribution of property to all members of the family, invariably large, accumulated wealth is soon dispersed.

The system of land tenure in Malabar is also unfavourable to the Moplahs acquiring land of their own and with it the sense of responsibility which a definite stake in the country brings. All land in Mala-

bar is supposed to belong to the chief landlords called Jemmies, who are as a rule Nambudiri Brahmins. In their case a strict law of primogeniture holds; the eldest son only may contract a legal marriage, so property passes from father to eldest son and tends continually to grow, as it is the traditional custom for the Nambudiris to buy land when possible but never to sell it.

The Nambudiris let out their land on twelve-year leases called Kanams. The tenant (Kanamdar) has a right to compensation for improvement if his lease is not renewed; but on the other hand his rent may be raised at each renewal. Leases are generally renewed and a refusal to renew is bitterly resented.

The Jemmies are easy-going landlords as a whole, but the uncertainty of conditions makes for agrarian discontent among the Moplahs and throughout those Hindu castes which provide the tenantry.

The Moplahs are not only a poor people but are educationally backward to an extent exceptional even in India. Such education as they have is mostly religious, and the schools attached to mosques are content to teach the children to repeat passages of the Koran by heart. Attempts to interest the Moplahs in secular education have had little success owing to the refusal of the Moplahs to attend the same schools as the Hindus, and the inability of their own religious teachers to give even elementary secular instruction.

Poverty and the contrast between the wealth and easy life of the Jemmies and the uncertain tenure of the Kanamdars' holdings, prepare the ground for unrest; but it is the religious fanaticism of the Moplahs which has made them notoriously a turbulent people. Since British rule was established there have been

thirty-five serious Moplah outbreaks, and two special Acts are in force designed to provide for disarming and levying fines on Moplah villages when outrages occur.

Their extreme fanaticism has also imposed a bar to the enlistment of Moplahs in considerable numbers for the Army, though their courage and physical efficiency would otherwise make them good fighting material. The pressing necessities of the war led, however, to the relaxation of the bar, and demobilised men who had acquired some military training added to the formidable character of the people.

The political conditions in 1921 all tended to produce a Moplah outbreak of a novel and widespread character. Previous outbreaks had generally been spasmodic and local, arising spontaneously over some religious dispute, usually through the desire of a recent convert to revert to Hinduism. Outrages of communal origin awoke fanaticism which turned every non-Moslem into an enemy to be destroyed; but such disturbances did not imply an attempt to upset Government.

In 1921 things were different. The Moplahs, as devoted members of the Sunni sect of Moslemism, listened to the propaganda of the Khilafat movement, then in close alliance with the Congress Swaraj and non-co-operation agitation. The doctrines preached were: (1) that the Hindus and Mahomedans should unite to paralyse the "Satanic" Government of India and thus achieve Swaraj; (2) that the Government of India was the enemy of Islam; (3) that nevertheless both Hindus and Mahomedans should exercise the virtue of non-violence in striving for their ideals.

These doctrines were eagerly accepted by all but

the most sober-minded and enlightened of the religious leaders and teachers of the Moplahs. A few held that rebellion against constituted authority was contrary to religion; but on the other hand to the more extreme leaders and to the people themselves the doctrine of non-violence was an insignificant and hardly understood part of the programme.

At conferences held in April 1920 in Ernad, and in Wallavanad in April 1921, inflammatory speeches were made and resolutions passed in support of the Khilafat in spite of the opposition of a small minority. Some of the principal agitators in the movement were not allowed to enter Malabar, but their meetings in other districts in Madras had been marked by speeches of great violence and had been attended by not a few Moplahs.

The doctrines spread, arousing fanaticism and holding out an expectation of an early end of the "Satanic" Government and the approach of Swaraj. It began to be apparent that an outbreak could hardly be avoided; and that it would be to some extent organised was evident when, in June and July, bands of Volunteers wearing a sort of uniform and sometimes with swords, were observed in various places. Parties especially began to assemble at Tirurangadi where there was a mosque with a far-reaching reputation for holiness, and special political associations with an outbreak which occurred in 1894. Incidents occurred in which armed crowds not only committed illegal acts but defied the police and prevented them from carrying out arrests. In each case it was evident that the mob was not only armed but was working on an organised plan.

The District Magistrate therefore decided that

action must be taken against the leaders of the movement under the Moplah Outrages Act, and thus brought matters to a head. Obtaining a small reinforcement for his police by calling on the detachment of the Leinster Regiment stationed in Malabar,<sup>1</sup> the magistrate planned a raid to arrest certain leaders believed to be assembled at Tirurangadi. The raid was carried out in the early hours of 20th August, and although as a surprise it succeeded, only three wanted men were found. Search of the town was continued till 10 A.M. when the main body was withdrawn to the collector's Court House with a view to visiting another village later in the day, some twenty-five police only being left to continue the search. Up to this point the town had been quiet, and though it had been necessary to enter mosques, often used by Moplahs as hiding-places, the search was carried out with due regard to religious susceptibilities; only policemen, themselves Moplahs, entered the building after removing their shoes. Reports were subsequently spread by agitators that mosques had been violated; but this was clearly propaganda, and the search of the mosques, quite legitimate if properly carried out, was in no way the cause of the rioting which followed later in the day.

So far nothing abnormal had occurred, but a little before noon news was received that a large crowd of Moplahs was approaching from the railway line (*i.e.* from the west), and the District Magistrate took a party of police supported by troops out to meet and disperse it, leaving a platoon of Leinsters to guard the

<sup>1</sup> This detachment normally consisted of one company at Calicut, but recently two extra platoons had been added to it in view of the prevailing unrest.

Court House. A collision between the police and the mob occurred, the police charging with fixed bayonets as the crowd continued to advance when called on to disperse. The police were met with sticks, and in self-defence unordered firing began, producing some casualties. This caused the crowd to yield a little and the police were able to push it back and effect some forty arrests.

Returning with his prisoners about 3 P.M. the magistrate learnt that the police party in the town had been driven in and the party at the Court House had been attacked by a large mob coming from the east. This attack had been driven off by Lewis gun and rifle fire, but a police officer and a subaltern of the Leinsters had fallen into the hands of the rioters, apparently when attempting to parley with the mob to induce them to disperse, and a Royal Army Medical Corps officer had assumed command. The mutilated bodies of the murdered officers were shortly afterwards discovered close to the camp.

It was evident that the little column could make no further movement that day and it took defensive measures for the night, as large crowds were reported to be in the town. The night passed quietly but reports were received at 7 P.M. that stations on the railway had been sacked and the line cut. The country was evidently "up" and the magistrate handed over the situation to the officer commanding the troops, as it had passed beyond civil control. How to get the raiding detachment back safely to Calicut was the immediate problem, as it was threatened by attack of overpowering numbers and was without communications and near the end of its rations. Speedy return, moreover, was necessary, as the protection of Calicut

had become a matter of anxiety; the police and volunteer detachments which formed its sole protection, in the absence of the column, were quite inadequate to deal with a mob invading it from the country round.

In view of these considerations the column started on its return march the following morning, the 21st, making west towards the railway line, and during the first three miles it had to beat off attacks delivered from all sides. On arrival at the railway, the line was found to be cut in various places, evidently with a view to isolating the column, which had in consequence to continue to march towards Calicut. Ferokeh, on the Beypore River, some six miles south of Calicut, was reached at 8 P.M., and there a train was waiting, but owing to the necessity of repairing damage to the line the party did not get to Calicut till midnight. Its arrival probably saved Calicut from being looted, but the force there was still too small for anything beyond local protection. Pending the arrival of reinforcements, nothing could be done to bring assistance to European planters or the Hindu population, who, throughout the country, were in imminent danger from the fanaticism of the Moplahs. Moreover, a platoon of the Leinsters and some police were completely isolated at Malapuram, a town some twelve miles east of Tirurangadi, where they were in charge of Government offices and also the sole protection of some European families. The arrival of reinforcements was bound to be delayed, as the railway line was cut in many places as far as Shoranur, fifty miles south of Calicut, bridges broken and roads blocked.

This then was how the situation indicated by the telegrams quoted at the opening of this chapter arose.



The military authority directly responsible for taking over control and restoring order was Major-General Sir J. Burnett-Stuart, the G.O.C. Madras District, with headquarters at Wellington.

General Burnett-Stuart had under his command: 1 British cavalry regiment, 1 brigade of Field Artillery, 2 British and 7 Indian battalions (including 1 battalion of Pioneers), and 1 Company Madras Sappers and Miners.

A small proportion only of these units could be made available. Reorganisation of the Indian Army was in progress, and in many directions the after effects of the war were still felt. The Indian battalions were all either in process of demobilisation, on furlough after return from overseas, or reorganising as training battalions; moreover, in the prevailing unrest, other parts of the Madras district could not be entirely denuded of troops. Obviously, too, there could be little scope for the employment of either cavalry or artillery under the conditions likely to be encountered. The area to be dealt with in Malabar was not large and the inhabitants were not provided with firearms, so it was fair to assume that normal measures would suffice. In any case, the interruptions of railway communications prohibited the employment at first of large forces. On all counts, therefore, it was neither practicable nor obviously desirable to employ larger numbers than were actually despatched to restore the situation.

The G.O.C. received the call for assistance on the 21st, and at once ordered the 2nd Bn. Dorset Regiment, followed by a squadron of the Queen's Bays<sup>1</sup> and a section of artillery, to move to Podanur where

<sup>1</sup> This squadron was not actually made use of.

the force concentrated on 23rd, under the command of Colonel Humphreys, Leinster Regiment. Podanur was selected as a base in the first instance, as it was necessary to repair the railway line before a further advance or active operations could be undertaken. As, however, a patrol train, sent out from Podanur on the 22nd, found the line clear as far as Shoranur, troop trains were pushed on to that point on the 23rd, dropping a few detachments for protection of dangerous points on the way. Reassuring news was received as regards the situation at Calicut, and the most urgent task was to relieve the detachment isolated at Malapuram. It was hoped to get the railway line enough in order to start a column for this purpose on 24th, but owing to damaged bridges it was the 25th before troops left Kuttippuram.

Meanwhile the detachment at Calicut was active. Working southwards, progress was made with the repair of the railway, and a column was organised to attempt the relief of Malapuram from the north. The arrival of H.M.S. *Comus* on the 25th and a march of 90 naval ratings through the streets, made the local situation sufficiently secure to enable this column to start the same day. On the 26th it met with determined resistance, and after a regular battle lasting five hours, in which the rebels suffered some 400 casualties, it succeeded in relieving Malapuram and in joining hands with the Kuttippuram column that day.

This early resumption of offensive action by the small and isolated detachment at Calicut is worthy of note and reflects great credit on the commander, Captain McEnroy of the Leinster Regiment. To the local civil authority it seemed that the town was so directly threatened and the force available so weak

that a defensive attitude was still necessary. Captain McEnroy, however, accepted responsibility, not only for leaving the town somewhat weakly guarded, but also for undertaking to force his way with about 100 men for a distance of thirty miles through a difficult country swarming with fanatical rebels. He correctly appreciated the danger of inaction, which would not only have given the rebels encouragement but entailed the risk of exposing the little party at Malapuram to attack by overwhelming numbers. His advance naturally diverted the attention of the rebels from that objective and established a sense of the moral superiority of Government which a defensive attitude would have shaken.

The relief of Malapuram may be said to mark the end of the first defensive stage of the operations. Planters and other Europeans whose lives had been in danger had either been murdered, or made good their escape, some of them with the greatest difficulty. There was plenty of mischief still for the Moplahs to do, by destroying Government property, such as buildings, telegraph lines and bridges, and even more, by directing their fanaticism against the Hindu population. This action opened the eyes of some of the Congress leaders to the dangers of Swaraj, and showed a possible result of their agitation which they had overlooked; so much so, that the agitators found it advisable to insinuate that the rising had been engineered by the Indian Government in order to introduce discord into Congress Khilafat alliance. The Hindu population had to suffer heavily; many were murdered and much property looted or destroyed. People escaped from their houses leaving their crops neglected or at the mercy of the rebels.

Even worse, the Moplahs had embarked on a definite campaign of forcible conversion, the effect of which would not terminate with the suppression of the rebellion. Readmission to Hinduism entailed many penalties, and readmission into the castes to which the victims belonged was still more difficult. Moreover, the Hindu who, after conversion, reverted to Hinduism stood in daily terror of his life. To the Mahomedan he became an apostate whom it was a sacred duty to kill.

Clearly a strong and rapid counter-offensive to suppress the rebellion and re-establish order was necessary. The rebels had declared that Swaraj had been established, and proclaimed one Ali Musaliar, as Raja of the Ernad and Wallavanad Khilafat Kingdoms.

On the 27th, although the railway line had not yet been restored throughout and he was forced to walk some miles, Colonel Humphreys succeeded in reaching Calicut, and proceeded to organise the opening moves of the next phase of the operations.

Ali Musaliar had established his headquarters at Tirurangadi and his early capture was the obvious objective. Columns from Malapuram on the east and Tirur on the south converged on Tirurangadi, and in the early morning of the 30th joined hands at the town where the rebels took refuge in the mosque.

On account of its holiness it was not considered advisable to attack the mosque, but it was surrounded and blockaded. The Moplahs sniped the troops from the mosque during the day, and at night a small party made a sortie, rushing a post and killing one man of the Dorsets. Their position was, however, hopeless, and next day, induced by an inspector of police, him-

self a Moplah, the whole party, including Ali Musaliar, surrendered.

This highly successful operation broke the centre of the rebellion, but in doing so eliminated the chief military objective. The Moplahs became henceforth roving bands of marauders of varying and ever-fluctuating size. Conditions of guerrilla warfare set in, which, at all times when the enemy is determined, take long to bring to an end. In this case there was no doubt about the determination of the Moplahs, although their object was rather to prove the impotence of Government than to harass its forces, with whom they endeavoured to avoid collision; and in this the characteristics of the terrain gave them every assistance. Fortunately for the troops, so far as it was a question of casualties, the Moplahs had few fire-arms—only those weapons looted from European or Jemmies' houses; for the most part they carried swords or war knives only.—That the capture of Ali Musaliar by no means meant the end of the rebellion was fully realised, but perhaps there was some over-optimism as to the number of troops required to complete the task. There had been a proposal to reinforce the Madras contingent with two additional battalions but this was for the moment dropped.

This decision should, however, not be ascribed solely to over-optimism; it was arguable that an overpowering number of troops might merely drive the rebellion underground, and in the absence of a definite objective, it was not clear what troops should do if the rebels remained inactive. Large numbers of troops could not permanently be kept in the district, and on their withdrawal outbreaks would probably recur if the spirit of the rebellion were not effectively broken.

In the absence of definite objectives there remained the alternative of "trailing a coat", *i.e.* of employing parties of troops strong enough to hold their own but small enough to tempt the rebels to offer opposition. To induce an enemy to show fight in order to inflict on him serious losses has been a well-established gambit in India frontier warfare.

How far the gambit either consciously or subconsciously influenced the decision of the military authorities in this case I do not know, but it is a point of view which requires consideration. The Moplahs, however, showed little disposition to engage Government troops seriously, and preferred to confine their activities to sabotage and outrages directed against the Hindu population.

In order to grasp more clearly the reasons which led to an unexpected prolongation of subsequent operations it may be well to consider some of the characteristics of guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare seldom starts fully organised as such; it results from the conviction, generally after defeat, that combat in stand-up conflicts is no longer possible. In the opening phases, guerrillas are often hampered by excessive numbers which cannot easily evade regular troops, and many of the men are not wholeheartedly disposed to continue the contest. Questions of supply are difficult: leaders with a special *flair* for the business in hand have not yet established reputations, and it is not yet known who, among those not actively engaged, can be trusted not to betray the cause. The methods, limitations and vulnerable points of the regular troops have not yet been learnt; in fact, the whole technique of guerrilla warfare has still to be developed.

It is in this early phase that the regular troops have

an opportunity of forcing a decision, but tardiness in providing sufficient numbers and hesitation in applying martial law may lead to the loss of the opportunity. To achieve rapid success, operations must be relentlessly carried out, great activity shown, and the military authority must have powers to deal with non-combatants abetting the guerrillas. Equally important is it that rebels, especially rebel leaders, should be tried and sentenced by summary courts, preferably military, in order to intensify the shock produced by capture. Delays entailed by trials under normal civil procedure deaden the shock, and belated punishments have little moral effect. In reviewing the Moplah rebellion after the event it was generally admitted by both civil and military authorities that if the case of Ali Musaliar had been disposed of in a few days instead of, as actually happened, after months of delay, much of the subsequent trouble would have been avoided.

Numbers are required to make the pressure exercised sufficiently widespread to increase the difficulty of evasion. Over-optimism at this stage is common, as surrenders in considerable numbers are likely to occur, and the natural proneness of regular troops to despise their guerrilla enemies leads to neglect of precautions. If, however, the guerrillas do not throw up the sponge, there will probably be a recrudescence of trouble marking a new phase. The fighters will have shed their faint-hearted brethren, become more mobile and made good many of their original weaknesses; in fact, will have acquired the technique of guerrilla warfare.

This second phase, if there has been over-confidence on the part of the regular troops, is liable to be

introduced by regrettable incidents, which on one hand give fresh heart to the rebels and on the other necessitate belated reinforcement of the Government forces and the tightening-up of repressive measures.

In the final phase we find the guerrilla bands steadily decreasing in strength, but composed of desperate men. Evasion is easier and mobility is increased. The task of the regular troops is increasingly difficult even if the danger of serious regrettable incidents has gone. It is not unusual at this stage for public opinion to show impatience, which does not make the lot of the soldier any easier. The use of a large and expensive steam-hammer to crush a very small stone is taken as a sign of inefficiency. A few determined guerrillas have occasionally won surprising concessions from a Government anxious under the circumstances to end the struggle rather than to lose face by continuing it with such unequal expenditure of effort.

The moral to be drawn is that neither the troops nor the Government should ever, from over-optimism, relax their efforts in the first phase when the going is good. It is a safe rule that, so long as guerrilla forces remain in being, they are never more dangerous than when a lull in operations enables them to mature plans for effecting surprise.

In the case of the Moplah rebellion the military authorities may have at first underestimated the force required, but the Government of India must take a considerable share of the responsibility as it tied the hands of the troops by imposing restrictions on the full exercise of martial law.

When the rebellion first broke out, and the civil authorities handed over control to the military, the



Government at once considered the question of proclaiming martial law in the area affected. A proposal that the *de facto* state of martial law which had come into being should be allowed to continue was rejected and it was decided that, in order to regularise the position and to indemnify military and civil authorities, martial law must be proclaimed. But the Government of India had only recently had to face the controversy and political propaganda inspired by the Amritsar incident and it was unwilling to take the responsibility of entrusting full martial law powers to soldiers. Not that it distrusted the soldiers, but it feared there might be a political outcry.

The martial law ordinance which was published, in consequence, contained certain provisos to the effect that summary courts should be conducted by civilians, that prisoners might be represented by counsel and have rights of appeal. In fact, the normal procedure of civil courts was to be followed as far as possible, supplemented by extra civil courts for the trial of offences against martial law orders. The military authorities were permitted to issue martial law orders, but not to go beyond making arrests for their breach. Their powers stopped short of punishment. These provisos were to have far-reaching effect, as they hampered the steps taken by the military to obtain intelligence, to prevent spying, and in other directions. They also tended to reduce the moral effect produced by military action, on the part of the population not actively engaged in the struggle. It was quite impossible, with the shortage of civil personnel available and for other reasons, to provide mobile courts to accompany columns. In consequence all prisoners, suspects and witnesses had to be sent back to centres

where courts were sitting, and punishments, if inflicted, came long after they would produce the moral effect required. Experience and the course of events led to the withdrawal of these provisos at a later stage.

To return now to the narrative, which has been interrupted and to some extent anticipated.

For some days after the capture of Ali Musaliar no considerable bands of rebels were met with, and columns of troops, moving about the country, were able to effect a number of arrests. Good progress was made with repairs to the railway and arrangements were made for its protection, extra troops being brought into the area for the purpose.

It was evident, however, that the spirit of rebellion was unbroken as, after the passage of columns, roads and bridges which had been repaired were again damaged and outrages of various sorts continued to occur, although in general the rebels avoided collision with the troops.

By 12th September it was known that there were fifteen bands of rebels at large, estimated in all to number about 3000 men, in an area lying some thirty miles east and south-east of Calicut, and a definite recrudescence of rebel activity became marked. To deal with this situation, small columns, chiefly formed from the Dorset Regiment and police, operated from various centres. The troops in the district at this time consisted of 1 section Royal Field Artillery, 2nd Bn. Dorset Regiment, 1½ companies the Leinster Regiment, and a company of 64th Pioneers, while at Cannanore the 83rd Light Infantry (Indian) was available for the protection of the northern portion of Malabar, where outbreaks occasionally threatened. Extra detachments were provided as required by the

64th Pioneers and the Suffolk Regiment, the latter carrying out the relief of the Leinsters, due for a normal change of station.

Attempts to ambush the mobile columns now became frequent, but the rebels achieved no considerable success and the columns collected a certain number of prisoners and inflicted casualties. No shortage of troops was felt and difficulty was chiefly experienced in obtaining accurate information of the designs and movements of the enemy.

This state of affairs continued for about a month and the Madras Government, realising that little progress was being made—in fact, the activity and efficiency of the rebels was increasing—appealed to the Government of India for a stiffening-up of the measures to be taken for the suppression of the rebellion. The following extract from a telegram, dated 11th October, from India to the Home Government is illuminating:

“Throughout the interior of Wallavanad and Ernad taluks, so the Madras Government state, active war against the British Government is openly being waged by a number of armed bodies of Moplahs. They estimate that these bodies include from 8000 to 10,000 men whose policy is to avoid open encounter and to lie in ambush and snipe at the troops. The Madras Government also state that the Moplahs have spies everywhere, that their information is very much better concerning the movements of our troops than any information obtainable by our troops, and that they attack and plunder the houses of Hindus and maltreat the inmates as they will and are to a great extent masters of the country. More isolated cases of forcible conversion and looting by wandering bands alone occur outside this area, but the Moplah popula-

tion is in an uncertain and sullen frame of mind. The Madras Government therefore urge as being absolutely necessary, systematic military measures with adequate forces, and, as an inevitable and necessary corollary to such measures, that means should be provided for the speedy trial and punishment of those found actively assisting men fighting against H.M. forces or those taken in arms against troops. The opinion of the chief local civil officers has been elicited and is to the effect that the absence of all provision for speedy trial and punishment has materially fortified the rebels in their resolute defence. They further report that the policy which relegates to Calicut, with the possibility of further proceedings on appeal, the Moplahs caught spying or suspected of leading troops into ambush is not understood by the ordinary Hindu population, which consequently shrinks from rendering any active assistance to the troops or authorities. The Madras Government urge that the proposed summary Courts Martial are only the appropriate and ordinary accompaniments of such operations as are now being conducted in Malabar."

The telegram goes on to state that additional troops had already been despatched to Malabar and that any further reinforcements required would be sent, that Madras had been recommended to strengthen the police force in order to occupy areas cleared by the troops, and, most important, that it had been decided to issue a further martial law ordinance to meet the views of the Madras Government. This ordinance would provide that trials for certain categories of offences, especially affecting operations, "Will be by the military Commander, or by an officer not being below the rank of field officer who is empowered by the military Commander in this behalf by writing". These were wise decisions but belated. The

rebels had acquired confidence and had been given opportunities of perfecting their organisation.

A general summary of the situation between 27th September and 21st October by the G.O.C. Madras District is interesting.

“The rebels change of tactics from open to guerrilla warfare has developed steadily and increasing signs of more efficient and intelligent handling are apparent. More people become implicated as rebellion continues. New recruits are brought in by terrorisation and attraction of loot. Portions of Ponnani and Calicut and the whole of the Ernad and Walluvanad taluks are involved. Active rebellion is not adopted by every Moplah, but behind the bands ambushing, dacoity and looting is participated in by remainder as opportunity offers. In the intervals they revert to peaceful life. In the military sense the situation is not out of hand, but tendency will be for bulk of population to become part-time, as opposed to whole-time rebels, for active bands to become smaller, more elusive and numerous and for dacoity to increase. Accordingly, G.O.C. asked for maximum number of troops he considers will be required. . . . This will permit (1) Continuous active operations, (2) Rebels against whom these operations are in progress will be prevented from moving to another place, (3) Repair and safety of bridges, roads and communications being secured, (4) Immediate action to be taken on local information.”

Reinforcements now began to arrive and were troops obviously selected as suitable to the nature of the country. By 16th October a Chin-Kachin battalion and the 2/8th Gurkhas had appeared, to be followed by 1/39th Garhwalis and 2/9th Gurkhas. The Gurkhas were not long in displaying their characteristics. On 21st October a detachment was attacked by some 100

Moplahs. The Gurkhas retaliated with *kukris*, killing 45 and capturing some firearms and swords at a cost of three casualties.

Reinforcements enabled operations to be more actively carried out, and a drive in which several columns co-operated was organised. The results of the "drive" were somewhat disappointing for reasons which will be given later, and it was decided to revert to the policy of individual operations from various centres, but in greater numbers and strength than had been possible before the arrival of more troops. Several sharp encounters resulted, among others, on 27th October, a column composed of Dorsets, armoured cars and artillery surrounded a village a few miles west of Malapuram and, meeting determined opposition in the village and surrounding jungle, inflicted 246 casualties on the rebels.

These measures did not, however, by any means bring quick and decisive results; the rebellion was now too well organised and the temper of the rebels at white heat. Some surrenders took place, but on the other hand there were cases in which those that surrendered again took the field. The lot of those who rendered assistance to, or were in sympathy with, the Government became increasingly hard. Still, the continuous pressure was bound to have effect in the long run. Many engagements took place in which the rebels lost heavily. The results of operations on a larger scale by degrees became apparent. By the middle of November surrenders became more genuine and frequent and the attempts of the determined residue to hit back had no great success.

On 13th November the Moplahs again were to find that Gurkhas are dangerous to meddle with. A post

held by a company of 2/8th Gurkhas was surprised and heavily attacked by some 2000 of the rebels, 56 of whom penetrated the post before the men were properly awake. Severe fighting took place in which the Gurkhas suffered about 40 casualties, including one British officer and three other ranks killed. Of the Moplahs, however, 234 were killed, including all those who had succeeded in penetrating the post.

Although this affair resulted in such heavy casualties to the rebels it illustrates the danger of any neglect of precautions in guerrilla warfare. The Gurkhas' post had been established in a native market-place enclosed by a mud wall nearly five feet high, and it had been assumed this afforded sufficient protection against a rush. In fact, the wall was pushed down by sheer weight of numbers, proving again that an obstacle not covered by fire is unreliable. The garrison, fortunately, was strong, consisting of Battalion H.Q. with four machine guns and one company.

By the first week in December the final stage of guerrilla warfare began to develop. Increasing pressure and surrenders had broken up the larger bands, and the smaller bands tended to seek refuge in the hills, from which they moved out from time to time to loot and inflict what damage they could. Their leaders still continued to exercise control and their capture was the chief object to be aimed at by the troops. Under these circumstances each battalion was allotted an area in which it could rapidly deal with any rebels who appeared and by its continuous presence help to restore confidence in the civil population. There were sufficient troops to cover in this way the whole area affected by the rebellion.

Heavy casualties were constantly inflicted and there was a constant flow of surrender.

Still, the final phase of the operations was to be long-drawn-out. The difficult nature of the country became increasingly favourable to the rebels, and though their parties decreased in size their desperate spirit remained unaffected. For example, in the second week of December one platoon of the Suffolk Regiment, operating with a platoon of the 83rd Light Infantry, found a party of rebels who counter-attacked fiercely from houses they were hiding in, losing 81 killed.

By the end of the year some of the chief rebel leaders had surrendered or been killed; capture of fire-arms began to be more frequent; but there were still two leaders with reduced bands to be accounted for and it became increasingly difficult to bring them to action.

In January, however, the situation had become sufficiently satisfactory to enable the number of troops to be reduced on a continuous programme and operations fell to a greater degree into the hands of the police. As a matter of policy the assistance of the police was called in gradually so that their authority should be well established before troops were finally withdrawn. It was not, however, till the end of February that the police and civil authorities finally resumed charge and martial law was withdrawn.

The approximate number of casualties suffered by the rebels during the course of operations were:

Killed	.	.	.	.	2300
Wounded	.	.	.	.	1650
Captured	.	.	.	.	5700
Voluntary surrenders	.	.	.	.	39,000



Casualties to the troops numbered only 137, but great numbers of the peaceful Hindu population were killed by the rebels, though how many it was impossible to ascertain.

These are striking figures, especially when the nature of the operations are considered, and they bear witness both to the determination of the Moplahs and the activity of the troops.

The Moplah rebellion produced what was definitely a small war; that is to say, that the troops were called on to act with the maximum force they could develop under the conditions imposed by the terrain and the methods adopted by the enemy.

There was, however, no strategic objective the capture of which would decisively affect the enemy's operations, and the will of the Government could be imposed on the enemy only by a process of attrition and exhaustion, the result of continuous unrelenting pressure.

Although in the nature of a small war, it may be noted that it opened with a purely police operation in aid of which a small detachment only of troops was called in. Similarly, it was left to the police to sweep up the last fragments of resistance when the troops had sufficiently restored order to permit the civil power to resume control. The military intervention, although it involved war-like operations, was in essence, therefore, police work on a large scale.

The operations clearly divided themselves into four distinct phases:

(a) The initial phases in which the police and small detachments of troops in the area were thrown on the defensive.

(b) The first offensive phase undertaken on the arrival of the first reinforcements.

During this phase the disturbed district was subdivided into areas, small garrisons were placed in the most important village in each area and from this small punitive columns radiated. Numbers were, however, hardly sufficient and columns were greatly hampered both in procuring information and in denying information to the enemy by the limitations imposed on the exercise of martial law. The moral effect of their action was also nullified by legal delays. There was a distinct danger during this phase of small columns being overwhelmed by superior numbers.

(c) The arrival of further reinforcements and the full exercise of martial law introduced a third phase, which took the form of a systematic attempt to clear the country by a "drive" sweeping it in a co-ordinated effort. This operation failed to give decisive results largely owing to transport difficulties and the obstacle formed by the Beypore River slowing up the movement. Coolie transport only could accompany the troops, and marches were not longer than five miles *per diem*, while not more than two marches could be carried out before the next line of supply was reached. The difficult nature of the country and the necessity of extending troops on wide frontages, of course, also affected the length of marches. The drive occupied three weeks and was carried out by four Indian battalions, each less one company employed to maintain the garrisons in the villages previously occupied.

Comparable to the Thames in size, the Beypore River, though forming an obstacle to rapid advance, afforded compensating advantages. By requisitioning native boats from Calicut it was made a convenient line

for replenishing supplies, while the boats were also used as a means of ferrying troops across. Moreover, two launches armed with machine guns provided as an escort to the boats were able to inflict casualties on Moplah strongholds established to resist the crossing.

It could hardly be expected that a deliberate drive of this nature would produce tangible results in the absence of any important objective which the rebels would defend. Either by hiding or retreating the rebels had many opportunities of escaping the troops. Still, the operation as an effective means of showing the Flag and the determination of the Government, had its value. The results, however, did not justify the repetition of the drive on a large scale.

(d) The fourth phase was marked by a reversion to the method of punitive columns, each acting in its own area with redoubled activity, made possible by increased numbers, confirming the impression of strength produced by the drive. The later periods of this stage included the re-establishment of civil control and the authority of the police.

During this phase the good effect of the establishment of military courts with their more rapid procedure was very noticeable, both in leading to surrender and in stimulating the flow of information.

The outstanding lesson of the episode is the danger of limiting the powers of the military authorities under martial law. Long experience has shown what powers it is necessary to give, and the consensus of opinion that a mistake had been made in withholding those powers in the first martial law ordinance is striking. The opinion was as strongly expressed by the civil as by the military authorities.

Except perhaps in the case of captured leaders, the powers are required, not so much for the purpose of inflicting punishment on those caught in open rebellion—the casualties inflicted by the troops provide for that: they are needed rather to bring home to the people not engaged in active resistance that it is dangerous to aid and abet the enemy, and that they must assist the Government forces.

In guerrilla warfare there is a struggle of wits in which information plays a decisive part. Without information as regards the presence of the enemy, the most active troops are condemned to aimless wanderings. The guerrillas, on the other hand, are never safe, nor can they plan offensive coups unless they have sure and early information of troop movements. Each side aims continually at achieving surprise; and surprise, if it is not purely fortuitous, depends on intelligence. Spying and the rapid communication of information obtained by spies becomes all-important and, obviously, professedly non-combatants become the chief instruments for each side to employ.

The military authorities must have power to bring quick and exemplary punishment, not merely to spies, but to those who provide them with false information or who refuse information which Government is entitled to demand. If a man is caught spying or is suspected of giving false information it is merely vindictive to send him away for trial and possible punishment at some future date. Immediate punishment is not merely exemplary but may elicit information of the utmost importance.

How far the Moplah rebellion was prolonged, with unnecessary sacrifice of life, by the curtailment of martial law powers it is of course impossible to say,

but it is evident that the employment of a larger number of troops at an earlier stage would have achieved little without adequate control over the intelligence system.

The far-reaching effects of General Dyer's action at Amritsar should be noted by soldiers. The Government of India appears to have allowed itself to be drawn into the common error of altering well-recognised and tested procedure in consequence of one exceptional incident.

Apart from the question of providing the military authority with adequate powers to elicit information, there is the further problem of deciding on the machinery that should be employed for its collection and dissemination. If troops are working in an unfamiliar area and do not know the languages spoken in it, as was the case in Malabar, and indeed is very often the case, evidently they must rely on the police as intermediaries. When the proclamation of martial law brings the police force directly under military control, it may be possible to rely exclusively on the police intelligence system, but on the other hand when martial law is not proclaimed, as in the Burma rebellion, a co-ordinating organisation becomes essential as the police are then merely co-operating with the troops. The solution adopted by Colonel Humphreys in Malabar was to employ the police as his sole intelligence organisation. The District Superintendent of Police became the chief intelligence officer, and under him his inspectors supplied intelligence officers to each of the sub-areas. It was a case of absorbing under martial law the existing civil machinery into the military organisation, and although for a time a military officer was detailed to check and collate informa-

tion, this was found unnecessary and merely added a fifth wheel. No hard-and-fast rule can of course be laid down as to how far the intelligence service can be entrusted to the police, but the general principle holds good that under martial law every use possible should be made of existing civil machinery provided it is, or can be made, efficient. In this case the police were efficient; but in an area where part of the population was openly hostile and the remainder terrorised, information was particularly difficult to obtain so long as the legal machinery was inadequate.

We may again note how essentially the task of restoring order was one for infantry. Mechanical transport was employed on various occasions to give extra mobility to infantry columns, and armoured cars had their uses especially for patrolling roads, both improvised and service vehicles being employed. There was little scope for employment of artillery, and probably infantry trench mortars would have met all requirements; at an early stage 3.7" howitzers were substituted for field artillery, as more suitable for dealing with buildings into which the Moplahs had in previous risings been in the habit of shutting themselves up to fight it out.

The air service does not appear in the picture and the nature of the operations and of the country left little scope for its employment either for reconnaissance or offensive action.

Similarly tanks, if they had been available, would have had no role. The nature of the country would have confined their action, and armoured cars were more suitable owing to the silence of their movements, their speed and economy in maintenance. Even armoured cars have their limitations, and in a country

where rivers form considerable obstacles the existence of bridges capable of standing the weight of the cars is an essential point requiring attention.

It has been noted that punitive columns, more especially in the earlier phases of the rebellion, were always liable to be rushed or sniped on the march, and protective measures had to be adapted to the circumstances and nature of the country. The governing principle was that the column with its protective detachments should cover sufficient ground to prevent the whole column being rushed simultaneously, but each of its components required to be a compact body, in immediate readiness to stand a rush till it received assistance from portions not attacked. Distances between protective detachments and the main body were reduced in the interests of mutual support to the extent consistent with covering a sufficient area, and often did not exceed 100 yards. Compactness and instant readiness were points that admitted no relaxation in the protective bodies.

It will be readily understood that inter-communication between various outlying posts and between detachments and headquarters presented many difficulties. Telegraph and telephone lines were constantly destroyed, and in the earlier stages it was not worth making the effort to maintain them. In the later stages, when a measure of control was established and the military courts possessed full powers, regulations imposing the heaviest penalties for interference with lines improved the position, and military lines were maintained. Similarly, little use could be made of despatch riders until conditions became fairly settled. The obvious necessity in such conditions is extensive use of wireless. At the time of the Moplah rebellion,

wireless for mobile operations was in its infancy, and only one unreliable set was available. Even to-day, under similar conditions, the normal wireless equipment of small forces would require to be supplemented, especially in the early stages of an outbreak; and it is clearly a point that must receive attention in despatching troops to a disturbed area when the nature of the country renders visual signalling impossible. The use of wireless is, of course, simplified, as messages in operations of this sort can be sent in clear.

Where the country lends itself to their employment, armoured cars present possibilities for inter-communication, but much depends on how far opportunities for road blocking and ambushes exist. A service on a regular time-table and restricted routes evidently is dangerous.



## CHAPTER VI

### CHANAK, 1922

How exactly to classify the part played by our fighting Services in what is generally known as the Chanak incident of 1922 is a little difficult. Police work of a sort it was, but of an international rather than an Imperial character, although the mandate for our action was assumed by our Government rather than imposed on us by international agreement. Mahan's remark to the effect that the British Navy has won many wars without firing a round perhaps defines to some extent the situation, in so far as it shows that the existence of force combined with a determination to use it if necessary may often suffice to impose the will of a nation without the actual exercise of force.

The display of force at Chanak brought one war to an end and effectively eliminated the danger of the recrudescence of other wars whose ashes were still smouldering.

Although the incident hardly comes within the subject of this book, it is worth recalling in these days when there is such a marked tendency to treat armed forces as the cause of wars and to forget their value, their essential *raison d'être*, as guarantors of peace internal and external. Qualities which are developed by armed forces in their duty of maintaining internal order may have equal importance when it is necessary to intervene in the interests of international order.

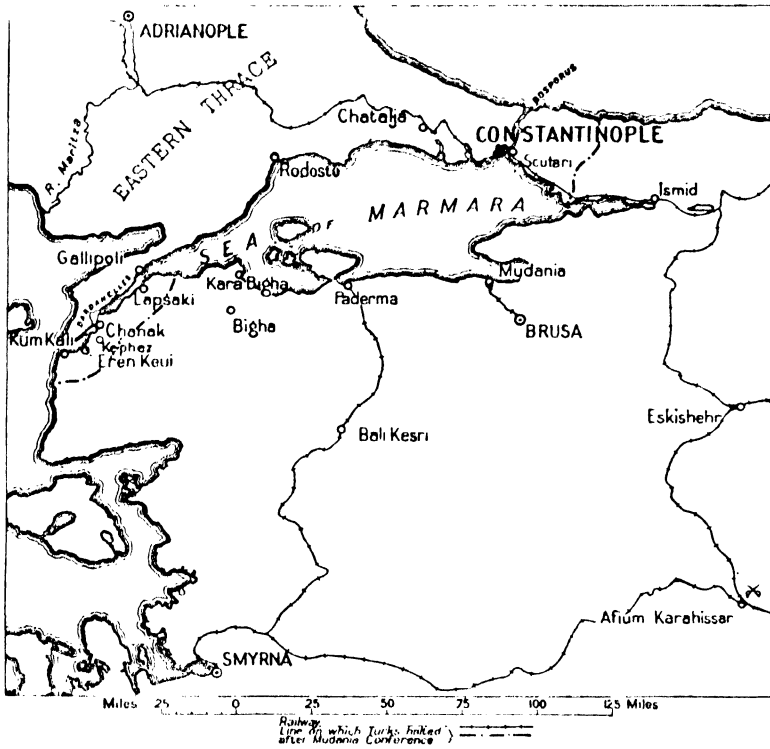
Without going too far back into post-war history,

let us recall the salient facts which led to the Chanak crisis.

The Treaty of Sèvres had been imposed on a defeated and exhausted Turkey, but Mustapha Kemal was not the man to acknowledge defeat, and the Turkish soldier has apparently unlimited capacity to recover from exhaustion. Kemal and his Nationalists broke away from the nominal Turkish Government and withdrew into Asia Minor to consolidate a new regime, leaving Britain, France and Italy occupying Constantinople and the Straits under Armistice conditions, and Greece busy taking over new territory assigned to her, while the more outlying portions of the old Turkish Empire fell to the Arabs or to the rule of mandatory powers. Kemal was, however, far from acquiescing in these conditions. He could face facts, and realised that the Turkish Empire was a thing of the past; but he was determined that the Turkish nation should survive to be revitalised and modernised. At all costs he refused to accept either political domination or dismemberment of purely Turkish territory.

It was soon apparent that the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, framed in the interests of minority communities and to serve the ambitions of European nations, would not become a reality unless Kemal was eliminated. But the Western Powers were not prepared to embark on new wars in the wilds of Asia Minor and were anxious to return to peace conditions. Inspired by ambition, Greece, with the consent of the Allies, undertook the task, and in June 1920 advanced into Asia Minor and Thrace—overcoming the ill-equipped and ill-organised resistance of the Nationalists. Far from supporting the Greek action,

SKETCH MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE CHANAK CRISIS 1922



however, the Allies soon showed signs of jealousy of Greek aspirations, and a halt was called when the Greeks had occupied Thrace, and in Anatolia had reached the line of the main railway to the east. Fresh efforts were initiated by diplomatic pressure to induce the Turkish Government to exert its authority over the Nationalists, and it was given six months grace to bring them into line. The respite merely gave Kemal time to consolidate his position and to establish connections with Soviet Russia which relieved him of anxieties in his rear and did much to enable him to re-equip and concentrate his forces.

At the end of 1920 Venizelos fell, and the restoration of Constantine gave France and Italy a good excuse for pursuing their own policy irrespective of the interests of Greece. But the return of Constantine re-enflamed ambitions, and Greece resumed operations in the spring of 1921. The Allies now definitely stood aloof and proclaimed a neutral zone round their area of occupation on the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. The Greek operations met with a large measure of success, and after a hard fight the Turks, forced to abandon their position on the railway line, were with difficulty rallied by Kemal on the line of the Sakaria close to Angora.

Here at the end of August a battle was fought for three weeks which decided the fate of modern Turkey. Both sides fought to exhaustion, but Angora was saved and the Greeks fell back on the railway line. Another long pause occurred during which France made a separate treaty with Angora and political dissensions recurred in Greece.

In the early summer of 1922 Greece withdrew two divisions from Anatolia and proclaimed her intention

of occupying Constantinople. To this the Allies presented firm opposition, and the French and British troops occupied the Chatalja lines to resist an attempt. Kemal seized the opportunity provided by the dispersion and demoralisation of the Greek armies, and with one crushing blow, prepared with the utmost secrecy, broke through the Greek position in Anatolia. The Greek *débâcle* was complete, the main army, pursued by Kemal, took refuge in ships at Smyrna while a northern detachment fell back on the Sea of Marmora to be ferried across to Europe.

Kemal entered Smyrna on 9th September, and it soon became apparent that he would not be satisfied with his victory, but was determined to recover Thrace and to extort terms from the Allies very different from those of the Treaty of Sèvres.

The situation was curious. Kemal was at war with Greece but was on Armistice terms with the Allies. The Greek Army had been able to escape by sea without violating the neutral zone established by the Allies, but the only routes by which Kemal could pursue it into Thrace, as he possessed no shipping, lay either across the Dardanelles at the Chanak Narrows or across the Bosphorus. The former was the shorter and strategically the more effective route, but neither route could be followed without traversing the neutral zone and passing through the Allies' army of occupation.

What attitude should the Western Powers adopt in the face of Kemal's intentions? They were not parties to the later development of the Greek war and were in no way called on to act as a rear-guard covering the Greek retreat. So far as they were concerned Armistice conditions governed their relations with Kemal.

ably operate without much risk, passage of transport, store-ships, etc., would be endangered if the Asiatic shore was in hostile hands. This would inevitably entail a withdrawal from Constantinople and the loss of the freedom of the Straits, perhaps the most important result achieved by the defeat of Turkey. Chanak was therefore a key position on the lines of communication of both the Army and Navy.

The maintainance of order in Constantinople was a serious responsibility as much of the population was in sympathy with Kemal and made a constant danger to the Christian communities, especially the Greek. The Turkish police were very efficient, but their efficiency was in itself a source of peril, as they were Kemalist in sympathy and would be quite as capable of organising disturbances as of suppressing them.

Against the Allied forces Kemal, if he was determined to push matters to extremes, could bring an army of upwards of 100,000 men, well armed and strengthened by captures of war material from the Greeks. A very critical situation had obviously arisen both from the political and military standpoint. On the political side a decision was required as to the attitude to be adopted towards Kemal. On the military side the immediate problem was, how the limited force available should be disposed in view of the approaching danger and to meet existing commitments.

Both the political and military problem called for unanimity among the Allies, as divergence of opinion would not only weaken their action but form a direct encouragement to Kemal to gain his ends by force. General Harington, as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces, suffered from the disadvantages the

commander of allied forces always experiences. He was responsible for the operations to which the force was committed, but he had not the authority to commit Allied troops to a course of action which their Government disapproved. The respective Allied Governments were far from being unanimous on the proper course to pursue. Politically all were determined not to be drawn into active war if it could be avoided, and all realised the danger of allowing the Turco-Greek war to spread to Europe. To minimise the latter danger two courses were open. To exert pressure on Greece to withdraw from Thrace, and allow Kemal free passage to occupy that territory which was his objective. Or alternatively, to compel Kemal to halt until an ultimate settlement had been arrived at in conference.

The first alternative would have been damaging to the prestige of the Allies and have prejudiced the final settlement; but France, having already come to an agreement with Kemal in matters affecting her own direct interests, leant towards this solution. Britain, on the other hand, was more concerned for the effects of loss of prestige and for the final settlement which involved the question of the freedom of the Straits.

As regards the military situation the politicians of both countries at first hardly realised that if the Ismid position and the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles were abandoned it would be impracticable to prevent Kemal continuing his pursuit of the Greeks or to remain in occupation of Constantinople. Our own Government issued no definite instructions, but fearing that General Harington's weak force might be involved in disaster it authorised him to make no attempt to hold these positions and to withdraw from

Constantinople to Gallipoli if he considered it advisable. General Harington had other views. He was confident that, provided the Allies showed a united front, Kemal, though he might threaten, would not attack. He was deeply concerned for what might happen if Constantinople were abandoned and foresaw the disastrous effects of yielding to threats. Consequently, in the absence of a definite indication of policy from either our own or the Allied Governments, he set on foot immediate measures that he considered necessary; and in a conference on the 10th September with the French and Italian commanders it was agreed to show more definite Allied forces both at Chanak and on the Ismid Peninsula. The French reinforced Chanak with a battalion and arranged to occupy half of the Ismid position, while the Italians also produced a small detachment to show their flag at Chanak. General Harington also asked that a battalion and a battery of 6" howitzers should reinforce him from Malta immediately.

Reports were received at this time that Nationalist troops were assembling at Bali Kesri. This confirmed the information as to Kemal's intentions, and there was evidently no time to lose, as Bali Kesri was only 100 miles from Chanak and the leading Turkish troops might appear in a few days. The strength of the force at Bali Kesri was still uncertain, but it was known that the main Turkish Army had begun to move from the Smyrna area. Constantinople was becoming excited, but General Harington's proclamations forbidding demonstrations were obeyed. General Harington had thus given a lead and his views had received powerful support from Lord Plumer, who at this time visited Constantinople and impressed on the



Government the necessity of presenting a definite policy to Kemal and of securing Allied support for it. After some brief hesitation Harington's action was confirmed by our Government and steps were taken to send reinforcements to him, the garrisons of Malta, Gibraltar and Egypt all being drawn on in the first instance, to be followed if necessary by the mobilisation of two divisions at home. Great importance was, however, attached to the importance of the Allies showing a united front, and already doubts were beginning to arise whether this could be achieved.

So far the action which had been taken was in conformity with similar measures adopted earlier in the year in face of the threat of a Greek advance on Constantinople. On that occasion British troops reinforced the French holding the Chatalja lines, in order to secure the integrity of the neutral zone. On the 15th September the Turks, by annexing that part only of the Sandjak of Chanak which lay outside the neutral zone, tacitly acknowledged the zone's existence, which appeared a favourable sign.

Still the Allied Generals and Commissioners were very anxious, and General Harington in an appreciation of the situation placed the danger points in the following order:

- (a) Chanak.
- (b) The Ismid position.
- (c) An upheaval in Thrace.
- (d) An outbreak with incendiarism in Constantinople.

In consequence, at a conference on the 19th September, he appealed to his colleagues to strengthen their detachments at Chanak and Ismid as they were

so small as to be little indication of Allied unity. This, however, they refused to do without the consent of their respective Governments, and on the 20th the French Government not only refused consent, but ordered the small detachments showing the flag to be withdrawn from the Asiatic side. The Italian Government adopted the same course. This was a heavy blow, as it was on the restraining effect of Allied unity rather than on power of resistance that General Harington and Sir Horace Rumbold, the British Commissioner, relied. Information that Britain was now standing alone would soon reach Kemal and act as an incentive to him to push matters to extremes. At the same time, if Britain withdrew from the attitude she had taken up, it would be more than ever damaging to her prestige, and greatly increase the danger to the Christian population of Constantinople.

General Harington decided to recommend his Government to stand firm but pressed that reinforcements should be expedited. He was confident that with the support of naval guns he was, for the time being, secure at Chanak, and the Turks, except parties of marauders, could not reach the Ismid Peninsula for some time. For the moment he was chiefly afraid of an outbreak in Constantinople, from which he had moved troops to Chanak.

The Government decided to endorse General Harington's policy, and, making the freedom of the Straits its primary object, agreed that Chanak must be held. The security of Constantinople was placed second and the integrity of the neutral zone at Ismid third in order of importance.

On the 21st September the anticipated situation began to develop rapidly. Nationalist troops on that

date occupied Bigha some forty miles north-east of Chanak close to the neutral zone. On the 22nd General Harington informed Kemal that the neutral zone which his representative had already recognised would be defended. But Kemal was assured that the preparations for defence were being made in the interests of peace and not in anticipation of war, and was invited to a personal interview. On the 23rd the Allied Governments telegraphed their peace proposals, which included certain important assurances, to the Angora Government and invited its representatives to a conference. But on the day the telegram was despatched and before any action on it could be taken, a force of about 1100 Nationalist cavalry entered the neutral zone at Erenkeui. Warned by Colonel Shuttleworth, commanding the troops at Chanak, to withdraw or he would engage them, the Turkish commander replied asking for an interview under a flag of truce, and this was arranged. At this interview Colonel Shuttleworth explained that the violation of the neutral zone constituted an act of war and that he would be compelled to fire on the Turks if they failed to leave. This explanation was received by the Turkish commander in a correct and reasonable manner and he withdrew his troops on the morning of the 24th.

The Chanak detachment now consisted of four battalions, two holding a position round Chanak on a four-mile perimeter with one and a half battalions in reserve; the other half battalion being detached to secure Kum Kali at the entrance to the Straits. A defensive position had, with the assistance of the Navy, been well entrenched and wired, and it was supported by two field batteries and the guns of the Navy. There were, however, as yet no British aero-

planes, and the greater part of General Harington's cavalry regiment were required at Ismid. So far the only reinforcement General Harington had received was one battalion from Malta. But other reinforcements were in sight—two battalions, a brigade of Field Artillery, and two pack batteries and one squadron R.A.F. from Egypt, another battalion and a battery medium artillery from Malta, and a battalion from Gibraltar. All these were due to arrive before the end of the month, while from England an infantry brigade, a considerable amount of medium artillery, a battalion of Royal Marines and three squadrons of Royal Air Force were under orders and might be expected early in October. As an emergency reinforcement, R.A.F. personnel *en route* for Iraq were diverted to the Straits and formed a useful addition to rifle strength. Another emergency contribution was being despatched from England in the shape of some naval guns on mountings designed for coast defence. Altogether as a basis for his plans General Harington could count on having the infantry strength of a division, and any deficiency of field guns would be more than made up by the heavier artillery, which could, from the Gallipoli side, cover the Chanak position. Coupled with the support of ships' guns this would make the small force of infantry on the Asiatic side secure, though a larger and more mobile force would be necessary to prohibit entrance into the neutral zone. Further reinforcements would be necessary too in order to hold the Ismid Peninsula and to cover Constantinople. Such reinforcement it was intended, however, would be despatched only if Kemal were determined to embark on war. If that occurred it was more than doubtful whether General

Harington's force and the Navy could, pending the arrival of reinforcements, delay a Turkish advance long enough to save Constantinople, and General Harington was authorised to concentrate the whole of his force for the defence of Chanak and Gallipoli if and when he deemed it necessary.

Meanwhile on 22nd September the troops on the spot and in sight were placed directly under a reconstituted 28th Division Headquarters with General Marden in command, responsible for the organisation of the defence of the Dardanelles. Colonel Shuttleworth continued in subordinate charge of the Chanak group. Pending the arrival of reinforcements there were on the Ismid Peninsula only a squadron of cavalry and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  infantry battalions with two field batteries in support, and in Constantinople only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  battalions for police duties.

The Turkish concentration at Bali Kesri which was still proceeding threatened both Chanak and Ismid but could not reach the latter for ten days. Kemal's forces were organised in three armies. The 3rd army on the right consisted of three divisions totalling some 11,000 rifles and sabres, and it was considered that this army would be directed on Ismid. It represented about the maximum force which in the first instance could be deployed on that narrow frontage. From Smyrna the 2nd army was known to be moving north and, allowing for detachments left to maintain control at Smyrna, might amount to 36,000 rifles and sabres. With this there was a strong independent cavalry corps. The whole of this army could reach the Dardanelles area before the end of the month and could be supported a few days later by some 18,000 men of the 1st army, also from Smyrna. There was little to

indicate Kemal's further moves. The area of concentration at Bali Kesri was suitable for an advance either on Ismid or Chanak, but a double line of advance with a central reserve available to reinforce either appeared probable.

On the 26th it began to look as if Kemal was determined to force the issue. His cavalry, raised to a strength of 2000 men with machine guns, again entered the neutral zone and again occupied Erenkeui. Three squadrons also crossed the neutral line southwest of Kara Bigha, and these detachments eventually pushed on to Lapsaki on the coast-line at the Marmora end of the Straits.

To counteract these moves Colonel Shuttleworth sent out a mobile column to Kephez, and he had authority to drive back the Turkish cavalry by force if, after being warned and given time to communicate with their superiors, they did not withdraw. At the same time further requests were made to Kemal to order his troops to respect the neutral zone.

Kemal's reply received on the 27th was not conciliatory. He denied knowledge of the neutral zone and accused Britain of standing in the way of his pursuit of the Greeks who in their retreat had devastated Anatolia. He complained that they were being given an opportunity of re-forming in Thrace and of maltreating the Turkish population there. As an evidence of a British pro-Greek attitude he stated that Greek warships were permitted to remain at Constantinople, and as regards British action he complained of the arrival of reinforcements, of demolition of Turkish property at Chanak, of fortification of roads to block Turkish pursuit and of guns being fired into the area where his troops were. At the same

time he admitted that the principle of the freedom of the Straits had been accepted by his Government, and requested that no actions such as he complained of should be continued, as they would give rise to misunderstandings detrimental to a settlement at the forthcoming Conference.

General Harington's reply contained a further invitation to a personal meeting to clear up misunderstandings, explained that the Greek ships had been already sent away under British pressure and that no shots had been fired in anger, only a few rounds for registration of guns; that arrival of reinforcements was to ensure peace, and that demolitions were only such as were necessary as a military precaution.

While this correspondence was still passing, Shuttleworth's mobile column at Kephez was endangered, as on the 27th a Turkish column two miles long was observed moving with the evident intention of cutting it off. This was perhaps the most critical moment of the whole incident, as it looked as if General Marden would have to open fire if Colonel Shuttleworth, who had been sent out to meet the Turkish column, considered an attack was intended. The Turks, however, adopted a conciliatory attitude, and although now in close contact showed no disposition to fight, moving under white flags or sometimes with arms reversed.

Within the next three days General Marden was able to strengthen his position, extending it to hold a garrison now consisting of six battalions in line, well entrenched and covered by outposts. All the Turks in close contact with the outposts were cavalry, estimated to be 4500 strong, but no guns had apparently been brought up and their infantry were kept well in rear.

While this critical position had been developing in

the East the Allied statesmen in London and Paris had been busy in an endeavour to find a common policy which would reconcile the British and French divergencies of opinion. That Eastern Thrace and Constantinople should eventually be Turkish was common ground, but the British Government was determined that Kemal should not be permitted to prejudice the settlement at the final Peace Conference by presenting a *fait accompli* achieved by threats. It was anxious for the safety of the Christian population in Constantinople if the city fell into the hands of Kemal's victorious army; but perhaps most of all it was determined that the Turkish pursuit of the Greeks should not again carry war into Europe with consequences which could not be foreseen or limited. Nothing which might imperil the principle of the freedom of the Straits, established at such cost, could be tolerated.

France, on the other hand, was determined under no circumstances to be drawn into a renewal of war with Turkey and was prepared to accept the assurances of the Turks as to the limits of their objectives. She, not having opposed Kemal, could not appear to be withdrawing in the face of threats, and she was not unwilling to establish exceptionally good relations with the victor in the Turco-Greek struggle. Her chief object was to clear the Greeks out of Thrace as quickly as possible in order to leave the ground open for Turkish reoccupation and to give the Greeks no chance of reorganising their armies and consolidating their hold on Thrace. A compromise was eventually reached, and, as has been mentioned earlier, on the 23rd a note had been addressed to the Angora Government. This note had contained the assurance that in



the final peace settlement which the Allied Powers desired should be made at a conference to be held as soon as possible, Eastern Thrace, up to the line of the Maritza, and including Adrianople, would revert to Turkey, and that allied troops would be withdrawn when peace was signed, leaving the freedom of the Straits to be guaranteed by the League of Nations. The reassurances were, however, subject to the condition that, pending the conclusion of the Conference, Turkish armies should not enter Thrace but should respect the neutral zone which had been provisionally established, and should not cross the Sea of Marmora. The Allies undertook to apply pressure on Greece to withdraw before the opening of the Conference behind a line to be fixed in consultation between the Allied Generals and the Turkish and Greek representatives. In order to fix the line of Turkish halt and Greek withdrawal it was requested that Kemal should meet the Allied Generals at Mudania or Ismid.

This last proposal had converted General Harington's invitation to Kemal to a personal meeting into one for a preliminary conference which all the Allied Generals would attend. As has been seen, the Allied note produced no immediate effect. The Turkish forces had continued their movement and, acting under orders, were closing in round the British troops at Chanak to such an extent that it became a question whether fire would not have to be opened if they continued this course. An ultimatum demanding immediate withdrawal was contemplated by the Government. Fortunately, when things looked at their blackest on or about the 28th, Kemal began to adopt a more reasonable attitude and General Haring-

ton was allowed to exercise his judgment as to the necessity of presenting an ultimatum. The situation was far from satisfactory, but Kemal gave an assurance that, although his troops could not withdraw, he had ordered them to avoid anything that might lead to a collision. Their attitude indicated that his orders were being obeyed, and at one time they even moved off ground which the British commander wished to include in his position. One must in fact pay a high tribute to the discipline, good sense and patience shown on both sides. In British troops one has learnt to expect such qualities, but it was surprising to find them so well developed in the Turkish Army recently organised and containing fanatical elements flushed with victory, while the memories of disastrous defeats must still have been rankling. Evidently the traditional good understanding and mutual respect between the two nations is not merely superficial.

Why Kemal should have become more amenable at this moment it is difficult to say with certainty. There were various influences at work. Probably the most potent was that he realised that Britain was not going to yield to threats. General Harington, though very conciliatory, had been quite firm; and the arrival of reinforcements, coupled with the response of the Dominions to the Prime Minister's appeal to consider the possibility of supplying contingents, must have convinced Kemal that General Harington had the full support of his Government. France too, though she had refused to oppose Kemal with force, was actively negotiating with him to secure his acceptance of the terms of the Allies' note, and one need not be too critical of French motives which were probably somewhat mixed. Unwilling to abandon her ally entirely,

France was unwilling also to see her emerge unaided with increased prestige from a difficult situation.

During the last few days of the month a fresh complication arose from the truculent attitude which the Greeks began to assume in Thrace. Taking advantage of the relief of pressure they began to bring in reinforcements, reorganise and generally tighten their hold on the country. Rumours that they were maltreating the Turkish inhabitants were not confirmed but caused the Nationalists to resent being held back. As a consequence, some small bodies of Nationalists succeeded in filtering into Thrace and there was danger that this might lead to violent clashes.

At last, on the 1st October, information was received that Angora had agreed to meet the Allied Generals on the 3rd October at Mudania. Kemal himself would not attend but detailed Ismet Pasha as his representative. General Harington accordingly arranged with the Allied Generals to proceed to Mudania and pressure was put on the Greek Government to send a representative.

On the 1st October too, M. Franklin Bouillon, the semi-official agent of France who had been in touch with Kemal, reported that after a 27-hour conference with Kemal the latter had given definite "halt" orders to his armies. Generally he confirmed the impressions General Harington had received as regards Kemal's action. A further hopeful sign was given by slight withdrawals of Turkish cavalry from immediate contact with our troops. This was in accordance with Kemal's promises.

Kemal had impressed on M. Franklin Bouillon his anxiety for the safety of the Turks in Thrace, urging the immediate withdrawal of the Greeks and the

assumption of control there by the Allies pending Nationalist occupation. To relieve these anxieties three Allied Commissioners were sent to Thrace on the 3rd to use their influence in calming the situation.

The conference at Mudania met on 4th October and it is beyond the scope of this narrative to record the various points which were argued out. It opened promisingly enough, but political questions were raised by the Turks and demands made which lay outside the terms of reference with which the Generals were authorised to deal. Their task was to secure acceptance of the lines which the Turks should halt on and the Greeks withdraw to. Consequently General Harington on the 5th adjourned the conference till the 6th, pending instructions from his Government. By this time the military danger point had shifted from Chanak to Ismid. At Chanak the Turks had withdrawn from close contact and there were no signs of reinforcements there, but at Ismid there was information of a Turkish concentration which gave weight to the Turkish threat that their advance would be continued through Constantinople into Thrace if their demands were not conceded. Small detachments began to appear and the British force at Ismid and at Constantinople was quite inadequate to oppose an advance in strength. Evacuation of the British personnel at Constantinople could probably be carried out in safety but that was about all that could be done. British families had already been removed.

Matters looked critical when it was found impossible to reopen the conference on the 6th as arranged. General Harington's telegrams had been received in London in mutilated form and further telegrams were exchanged before the British Government could

review the situation. Still further delay occurred when it became evident that the British and French representatives at Mudania had divergent instructions as to the degree to which Turkish demands could be conceded. The matter had to be thrashed out in Paris and there was considerable difficulty in arriving at a formula satisfactory to both Governments. The British Government would not agree to an unconditional entry of the Turks into Eastern Thrace until the final peace settlement had been made, whereas the French Government was more complaisant. Eventually a formula was arrived at, whose chief provision legislated for the control of Eastern Thrace by a limited force of Gendarmerie under Turkish command when the Greeks withdrew, but only after an interval not exceeding one month during which Allied troops and missions would be responsible for maintaining order. The Allies would, after the establishment of Turkish Gendarmerie, continue to maintain troops at certain points until the final peace treaty was signed.

It was not until the 9th that this formula could be presented in its final shape, and on that date the conference, which had been postponed from day to day, reassembled. At this meeting the draft convention which General Harington had drawn up and which now included the final provisions as regards Thrace, was given to Ismet Pasha, and all the Allied Generals pressed him to accept it. Ismet, however, had to refer to Angora for instructions and it was not till the morning of the 11th that it was finally signed.

How critical had been the military situation while the fate of the conference hung in the balance during the days of postponement from the 6th to the 9th can

best be realised when one looks at the distribution of the British force confronting the whole Turkish Army and responsible for maintaining control over the potentially hostile population of a large city. On the 7th October it was as follows:

*At Chanak and Gallipoli*

- 1 squadron Cavalry less 1 troop.
- 6 battalions of Infantry.
- 4 batteries Royal Field Artillery.
- 2 pack batteries.
- 4 medium batteries.
- 22 naval guns on land.

On this date another battalion was due to arrive but its destination was not yet decided.

*At Constantinople*

- 1 troop of Cavalry.
- 3 battalions Infantry.
- 1 Royal Marine battalion.
- 1000 Royal Air Force details.
- 1 Field battery.

*On the Ismid Peninsula*

- 2 squadrons of Cavalry.
- 2 battalions Infantry.
- 2 batteries Royal Field Artillery.

The Ismid force was nothing more than a weak rear-guard to cover the evacuation of Constantinople should that become necessary. Although it would have received powerful assistance from the ships, which could keep the main roads running close to the shore under fire and thus confine a hostile advance to diffi-

cult broken ground, it would have been outnumbered by something like ten to one by the northern wing of the Turkish Army now concentrated opposite it.

In Constantinople itself, in the event of a rising, the British could count with reasonable confidence on receiving assistance from the French. Moreover, the appearance and bearing of the British troops, especially a Guards battalion and the R.A.F. contingent, had had an admirable effect. The Chanak force was sufficiently strong to hold its own and was not now seriously in danger, but as it was responsible for the key position it could not be drawn on to assist the other detachments.

By the 11th, when the convention was signed, the Chanak position had been further strengthened by two battalions, two pack batteries and four medium batteries, and another battalion had been added to the Constantinople group.

The signing of the convention removed the danger of war. Kemal had agreed to halt; and the Greek Government, under the sensible and powerful influence of M. Venizelos who had returned to power, had agreed to carry out their withdrawal from Thrace; it only remained for the Allied troops to see that the new Turkish administration took over control without incident pending the final peace settlement. The Chanak incident may be considered as having closed at Mudania, and fortunately it had been handled in a manner which improved the relations between the parties concerned and gave rise to no bitterness. It has re-established the Turkish belief in the firmness and fairness of the British Government, and though British troops remained in occupation of Constantinople many months while final peace

negotiations were in progress, no resentment was shown to them.

In taking stock of the whole episode, what immediately strikes one is the helplessness of the diplomatist without the backing of force when dealing with a determined opponent. There was little in Kemal's attitude to indicate that he would have yielded to diplomatic pressure or have attached more importance to the representations of the Allies than Japan has to those of the League of Nations in Manchuria. Undeterred by the potential strength of the nations arrayed against him, Kemal knew that he could achieve his object if the Allies were unwilling to make use of their strength. It was only when convinced that force would be met by force that he held his hand.

The weakness of Kemal's position lay in the fact that force could be brought into play against him, while the strength of that of Japan turned on the impracticability of employing force against her. Kemal relied on bluff, while Japan relied on the real strength of her position and refused to yield to what was little more than bluff. Kemal's bluff and display of force extorted notable concessions, and it is all the more remarkable how small a demonstration marshalled against him finally secured the points of essential importance to the Allies. The little British contingent without firing a shot prevented the spread of war to Europe, saved Constantinople and the Christian element of its population from very real dangers, and secured the freedom of the Straits. Incidentally it did much to re-establish British prestige and friendly relations with the new Turkey. These were results on which the fighting Services may well pride themselves, while the whole incident was a triumph for a policy



of firmness based on a solid foundation of force and carried out with restraint and control of temper. As is so often the case both in actual war and purely police operations, the event turned on a contest of wills in which a correct appreciation of the weakness as well as the strength of the opponent was a determining factor.

When the contest opened Kemal held a strong hand, and it was not difficult for him to see the weakness of his opponent's position. He was well aware of the lack of unity among the Allies and of the smallness of the forces they held on the spot. He had little reason to fear that they would undertake far-reaching offensive operations against him. His weakness lay in his own camp. How far could he be certain that he could control his own army inflamed by victory if the Allies offered determined opposition? He might achieve initial successes, but it was hardly conceivable that the Great Powers with their potential strength would tolerate defeat.

Kemal could bluff, but General Harington rightly appreciated that he could not afford to go to extremes. In holding the initiative Kemal had an immense advantage. So long as he could control his own army, he could choose his own moment to call a halt if the situation became too dangerous, and his whole career shows that, in spite of a somewhat erratic character and great determination, he possesses to a remarkable degree the faculty of appreciating the limitations within which he must act.

Kemal's bluff developed in three stages. First, the attempt to frighten us out of Chanak. When that failed to achieve immediate success, there was still a hope that a prolongation of the threat might break his

opponent's nerve; but the continuous arrival of British reinforcements must have convinced him that Chanak, at any rate, would not be abandoned. The third phase of the bluff, the threat of attack along the Ismid Peninsula, was probably designed only to extort the maximum concessions, from the Mudania Conference. With the Allies in full command of the Dardanelles an advance on Constantinople could hardly be seriously contemplated.

General Harington originally held a very weak hand. He could only guess how far Kemal was bluffing and how far he would be able to restrain his army; moreover, he had no certainty as to the backing which would be given to him by the Allies or even by his own Government. If he had misappreciated Kemal's attitude, he ran a grave risk of exposing his small force to what might have been much more than a minor disaster, and have brought about an unwanted war. The fact that the initiative lay with Kemal evidently constituted the main danger, and the temptation to withdraw to the safety of Gallipoli must have been all the greater from the knowledge that such a course would become necessary if reinforcements were not given him, and that it would provoke little criticism. In the first instance General Harington met Kemal's bluff with bluff, but when Government support was forthcoming and reinforcements began to arrive, his hand was made, though the cards required to be played carefully, and there was always an element of risk from the absence of certainty as to what Kemal might do.

The dispositions of General Harington's force are interesting. It was at all times much too small to justify any attempt to prevent the Turks entering the

neutral zone; that would have entailed vicious dispersion. But by concentrating the main body of his force at Chanak, where with the assistance of the Navy a determined stand could be made even against greatly superior numbers, the communications of the weak detachments required for the protection of Constantinople were secured, and the way was kept open for more extensive operations if an attack on Constantinople materialised.

Kemal was too good a soldier not to realise the strength of the British position both actual and potential; but it is understandable that his subordinates, flushed with victory, might easily have got out of hand if they had been allowed to come in large numbers in close contact with the small British forces. His use of his cavalry and the way in which he kept his infantry and guns in the background was an indication that, though bluffing, he was not prepared to gamble wildly. Cavalry alone could not attack, and so long as he was only threatened by cavalry General Harington was able to refrain from delivering an ultimatum difficult for Kemal to comply with and difficult for the British to enforce.

The responsibility thrown on General Harington and his subordinates on a larger scale was very similar to that which may fall on officers when troops are called out in aid of the civil power. The magistrate may sanction or even advise the use of fire, but the ultimate responsibility falls on the soldier to decide whether it is necessary. In this case the Government had sanctioned the use of force, but it was for the soldier to decide whether it could be avoided. Moreover, the situation was so critical that General Harington had to delegate his responsibility to his

subordinate commanders and trust to their carrying out his policy. Definite orders could not be given, and on General Marden and Colonel Shuttleworth rested on several occasions the decision to fire or not to fire, and theirs was the necessity of exercising tact, patience and restraint, while at the same time judging how far the purely tactical position was imperilled. The responsibilities of war and those of police duties can seldom have been so closely combined.

The position of the troops is also worth considering. On the one hand great demands had to be made on them to prepare for action at high pressure—to dig, to wire, to move guns into position and to exercise vigilance on a war standard. On the other hand, discipline and control of the highest order was required to check any tendency to excited or panicky action. In daylight when the bearing and intentions of their opponents could be seen, and when the humour of the situation would no doubt appeal to the soldier, the test was not so high, but at night imagination is stimulated and the conditions were sufficiently dangerous to permit no acceptance of risk. Not all troops would have come through the nervous strain without excursions or alarms. Discipline and mutual confidence between the troops and their leaders were the essential factors and the newly resuscitated regular army showed that it possessed these attributes, while the war experience of the leaders of all grades must have been of immense value in ensuring that precautionary measures were adequate.

That Kemal hoped to present a *fait accompli* to the final peace conference can hardly be doubted. When nations are unwilling or unprepared to fight, such a gambit is obviously effective and most difficult to find

an answer to. A much greater effort is required to undo what has been accomplished than is needed to prevent its accomplishment. The attractions of the gambit are likely to give rise to troublesome problems in the future. Prompt counteraction to prevent the situation getting out of hand is generally the best preventative; and in our overseas garrisons, provided that they are maintained at reasonable strength, we have a source from which reinforcements can often be rapidly concentrated at points where an ugly situation may develop. Chanak affords a fresh illustration of their value in this respect; the reinforcements drawn from them not only strengthened the hand of the commander on the spot but also gave an indication of the determination of the Government.

The old recipe "send a cruiser to show the Flag and look after British interests" is still a good one, and the overseas garrisons fulfil on occasion much the same functions. They supplement the impression produced by naval dispositions, or provide a substitute when the scene of trouble cannot be reached by the Navy alone. It is too often assumed that our overseas garrisons are merely for the protection of our naval bases and lines of communication; their police duties, often of an international order, are frequently overlooked in the demand for economy.

Those who have read the study of Mustapha Kemal's career contained in *Grey Wolf*, by H. C. Armstrong, may be inclined to think that I have claimed too great a measure of success for the results obtained by the British action in the Chanak incident. The author attributes practically complete success to Kemal's bluff, and comes perilously near being gratuitously offensive in his comparison of the char-

acter of General Harington and his opponent, without adducing evidence to support his estimate. That Kemal extorted concessions from the Governments of the great Powers concerned I have admitted; but this was due to the unwillingness of the latter to support Greece at the risk of becoming involved in war, rather than to the local military situation which Kemal's attitude towards the British force produced.

Mr. Armstrong admits, as General Harington correctly appreciated, that Kemal recognised the danger of attempting to overcome British resistance by force, and admits also that the attempt to frighten General Harington into withdrawal failed. He is inclined, however, to exaggerate the amount of force at General Harington's disposal, in order to cover the failure of his hero. His statement that the orders issued to the British troops at Chanak "were a weak compromise—to hold up the Turks but not to fire or use force" would carry more conviction if he had suggested that the Turks would have withdrawn without fighting if fire had been ordered, and if he had made it quite clear whether these were the orders General Marden had received or whether they were those issued by the local commanders for guidance of troops in immediate contact with the Turks. In any case the proof of the pudding is in the eating and the troops carried out their orders with remarkable success.

It is interesting to note that the German author of *Mustapha Kemal. Between Europe and Asia* acknowledges the success of the British action and claims that it re-established British prestige in the East. He perhaps hardly realises how much these results were

due to the initiative and sound judgment of the military commander, being more concerned with the support given to the commander by Mr. Lloyd George, which was of course ultimately the decisive factor.

A very interesting account of incidents which occurred at Chanak during the critical last days of September will be found in a contribution by General Marden to the *Army Quarterly*, October 1933. His narrative shows on how many occasions the situation was saved by the restraint, good sense and discipline of the troops. And how full of anxieties and difficulties was the situation.

## CHAPTER VII

KHARTUM, 1924

No one who ever served with the Egyptian Army can think without the deepest regret of an episode which marked the termination of a long comradeship-in-arms maintained through fierce fighting and many hardships: a comradeship which rescued a great territory from chaos and misery and, under a purely military Government, gave it a fresh start towards prosperity. Reorganised by Sir Evelyn Wood, and commanded in succession by Grenfell, Kitchener, Wingate and Stack, the Egyptian Army was a force of which the British Army was justly proud, and of which many British officers had affectionate memories. Competition to serve in it was always keen, and, especially in the Sudanese battalions, the relations between British officers and the men were of the happiest.<sup>1</sup>

It may fairly be claimed that the disruption did not originate within the Army nor was it due to discontent among the people of the Sudan. It was the consequence of the clash of political ideas in Egypt. In an earlier chapter the conditions which existed in Egypt after the war are dealt with more fully, but they may be briefly recapitulated here in order to show how the trouble spread to the Sudan.

<sup>1</sup> For the information of those who are not familiar with the organisation of the Egyptian Army when under British command, or with that of the Sudan Defence Force, an appendix has been added to this chapter giving some notes on their composition and history.



Egypt up to the outbreak of the war had been a vassal State of Turkey; but Turkey had made no attempt either to prevent the loss of the Sudan to Egypt through the Mahdist rebellion, or to take part in its reconquest, effected by British and Egyptian Army troops in the closing years of the nineteenth century. When, therefore, Egypt in 1914 became a British protectorate, no consequent change took place in the ownership of the Sudan. Similarly, when the British protectorate of Egypt was terminated in 1922, the Anglo-Egyptian condominium established in the Sudan was unaffected.

When, however, after the war, the agitation for complete independence arose in Egypt and led to the termination of the protectorate, it included a claim for the recognition of the Sudan as an integral part of Egypt. This claim was denied by the British Government on the grounds that both the reconquest of the Sudan and its modern development resulted from British initiative and expenditure of British lives and money. The condominium fairly represented Egypt's share in the enterprise, and the disappearance of Turkey and independence of Egypt in no way affected British rights. Moreover, the British Government could not possibly have consented to hand back the Sudan to purely Egyptian control, at the risk of a recurrence of the conditions of misgovernment and oppression which had given rise to the Mahdist revolt. Neither the interests of the Sudanese, nor British capital which had been invested in the Sudan, could be risked.

Nationalist sentiment in Egypt saw things in a different light. It was easier for it to remember the original conquest of the Sudan than its subsequent loss and the circumstances of its reconquest. There

was, too, the question of the Nile water. Egypt was jealous of the share the Sudan might take, and, moreover, projected control works in the Sudan, though designed for the benefit of Egypt, would, it was imagined, give the Sudan Government the power of turning off the tap at critical periods and thus of bringing irresistible pressure on Egypt. Such fears are, of course, exaggerated, but they were played on to the utmost for propaganda purposes.

The termination of the protectorate and the acknowledgment of Egypt's independence did not satisfy the Egyptian Nationalist Party, as Britain still retained her interest in the Sudan, and still claimed the right of maintaining British troops in Egypt to provide for the security of the Canal route and the safety of foreign lives and interests in Egypt. Both these issues she treated as subjects reserved for settlement at a future date. Agitation continued, and no whole-hearted effort was made to establish constitutional government under the conditions which Britain imposed. It was not till early in 1924 that the first Egyptian parliament assembled, and when it met, its attention was directed rather to furthering agitation than to settling down to its legitimate business. Zaghlul Pasha, who had returned from banishment under the general amnesty granted to political offenders in 1923 and had become Prime Minister, was induced to come to London to discuss the reserved subjects in the hope of reaching an acceptable compromise: but negotiations soon broke down. Meanwhile, with increasing intensity, Egyptian agitators endeavoured to stir up a movement in the Sudan which could be represented as a demand by the Sudan peoples for unity with Egypt. These efforts did not

produce much effect at first, but early in 1924 a "White Flag" Society was founded in the Sudan whose object was to spread the movement for unity with Egypt by organising demonstrations. Egyptian officers and Egyptian officials of the Sudan Government were enlisted as agents of the agitation, and every effort was made to capture young Sudanese under training for Government employment, or anyone with a grievance or thwarted ambitions. It was not difficult to represent glowing prospects of a wider career if the European element in the Government disappeared. The great mass of the Sudan population was, however, entirely unaffected by the agitation, and showed no desire at all for exclusively Egyptian government in spite of religious affinities. Heads of tribes and the chief notables were aware of what the Sudan suffered under the pre-Mahdist Egyptian rule, and were not slow in expressing alarm at the idea of a withdrawal of British authority.

As a result of the White Flag movement, demonstrations were held in June and July 1924, but the first events of a serious nature did not occur till August. On the 9th of that month the students of the Military School at Khartum became mutinous and marched under arms through the streets, causing much excitement both in Khartum and Omdurman. Fortunately the authorities of the school were able to impound all ammunition on charge while the students were parading the streets, and on the return of the latter a company from the British garrison had little difficulty in surrounding and disarming the cadets. The police were also able to disperse the crowds; but to allay the general excitement and unrest British troops were marched through Omdurman.

On the same date an even more serious occurrence took place at the railway works at the Atbara junction, where the Egyptian Railway Battalion got out of hand and commenced damaging Government property. At Port Sudan also some disorder was caused by a small detachment of the Railway Battalion.

These events were sufficiently serious to cause Mr. Sterry (acting as Governor-General in the absence of Sir Lee Stack) to recommend the immediate reinforcement of the British garrison of Khartum (one battalion) by a second battalion, and the despatch of a warship to Port Sudan, as he was uncertain how far he could continue to rely implicitly on the Sudanese and Egyptian battalions if called on to repress disorder. As will be seen, it proved exceedingly fortunate that this precautionary measure was taken at an early stage.

To deal with the outbreak in the Railway Battalion two platoons of British infantry and a dismounted company of Arab mounted infantry were despatched from Khartum, and arrived at Atbara late on the 10th August. Next morning the men of the Railway Battalion started fresh demonstrations, but were surrounded and forced back to their barracks by the British and Arab detachments. However, they renewed attempts to break out, and after a hand-to-hand struggle in which the Arabs used the butts of their rifles, brick-throwing commenced, with the result that the Arab company eventually opened fire, inflicting some twenty casualties. Fire was apparently opened without orders but under great provocation. These events, which gradually became known in Egypt, caused much excitement there, especially as the press reported that the shooting had been carried

out by British troops on unarmed Egyptians. Actually no British troops had taken an active part.

The Egyptian Government took no satisfactory steps to allay public excitement, and allowed the incident to be used for further anti-British propaganda, claiming that a British officer was in charge of the situation, and that the Sudan Government was responsible for sending troops to put down the outbreak by force. While encouraging the idea that the Sudan Government had fomented the disorders in order to show the necessity of British troops and control, the Egyptian Government itself tried to use the incident to establish a right to override the Sudan Government. It demanded that an Anglo-Egyptian commission of enquiry should be held, ignoring the courts of enquiry held under the orders of the Sudan Government, and called for direct report from the acting Sirdar as if he were a direct subordinate. The British Government, however, firmly resisted these demands and other attempts to make capital out of the situation.

The Railway Battalion was disbanded and deported to Egypt by detachments, suitable steps being taken to prevent demonstrations on the way; and in response to Mr. Sterry's recommendation the British garrison in the Sudan was reinforced by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders from Egypt, while another battalion was prepared for despatch at forty-eight hours' notice, a battalion from Malta replacing the Argylls in Egypt. In the Sudan those concerned in the outbreaks were tried and sentenced by courts-martial, and certain disaffected officers and officials concerned in the White Flag movement were arrested and deported.

Under these firm measures conditions in the Sudan showed signs of improving, though propaganda in Egypt, if anything, intensified.

During the next three months the only event of any importance in the Sudan was a demonstration organised in September by some disaffected officers of the 12th Sudanese, stationed at Malakal near the junction of the Sobat River with the White Nile. The situation was sufficiently serious to necessitate sending half a company of the Leicester Regiment from Khartum to cover the arrest of the instigators of the trouble, almost all Egyptian officers or clerks. The battalion itself remained quiet and arrests were effected without difficulty. Somewhat similar trouble threatened during the summer in the battalion at Wau in the Bahr-el-Ghazal, but the officer commanding the district nipped it so sharply in the bud that it never materialised. These incidents are notable chiefly as showing, in the light of later events, how widespread and determined was the effort to undermine the loyalty of Sudanese troops.

On 19th November the murder of the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, when driving home from the Ministry of War in Cairo, shocked the world and started a new crisis. It was evident that the murder was a direct consequence of the anti-British agitation and of Egypt's preposterous claims on the Sudan. It was suspected even that certain highly placed Egyptians were implicated, and the Egyptian Government could not escape responsibility for the outrage.

To bring this home, drastic action was necessary, and Lord Allenby, who had returned from leave and resumed his post as High Commissioner in Egypt, presented, on behalf of the British Government, eight

demands for reparation. Zaghlul Pasha accepted four only of these, and among those he rejected was the demand for the immediate withdrawal of all Egyptian troops from the Sudan, including all Egyptian officers in whatever capacity they were serving.

Orders were, however, issued on 23rd November to the acting Sirdar (Huddleston Pasha) to give effect to this demand. The problem which the enforcement of this order presented to him were extraordinarily difficult.

The units to be evacuated were the 3rd and 4th Egyptian infantry battalions and three batteries of artillery, all stationed at Khartum. In addition were a number of Egyptian officers either serving with Sudanese battalions or employed in various administrative capacities scattered through the Sudan. Of the three batteries of artillery two were commanded by British officers, and they constituted the only artillery in the country with the exception of one or two immobile guns mounted in the fort near the British barracks in Khartum.

The troops available to enforce the order were two British battalions, the Leicesters, who formed the normal British garrison, and the Argylls, recently brought in as a reinforcement.

These battalions would, however, in addition to enforcing the order for entrainment at Khartum, have to find detachments to act as escorts on the trains and to secure important points on the railway and at the places of detrainment.

In addition to the British troops there were, of course, available the Sudanese battalions and some Arab units. It was impossible, however, to say how far these could be relied on; many of their officers

were Egyptians and it was known that efforts had been made to shake their loyalty. At the best they were to a large extent co-religionists of the Egyptians, and their religious fanaticism was easily aroused.

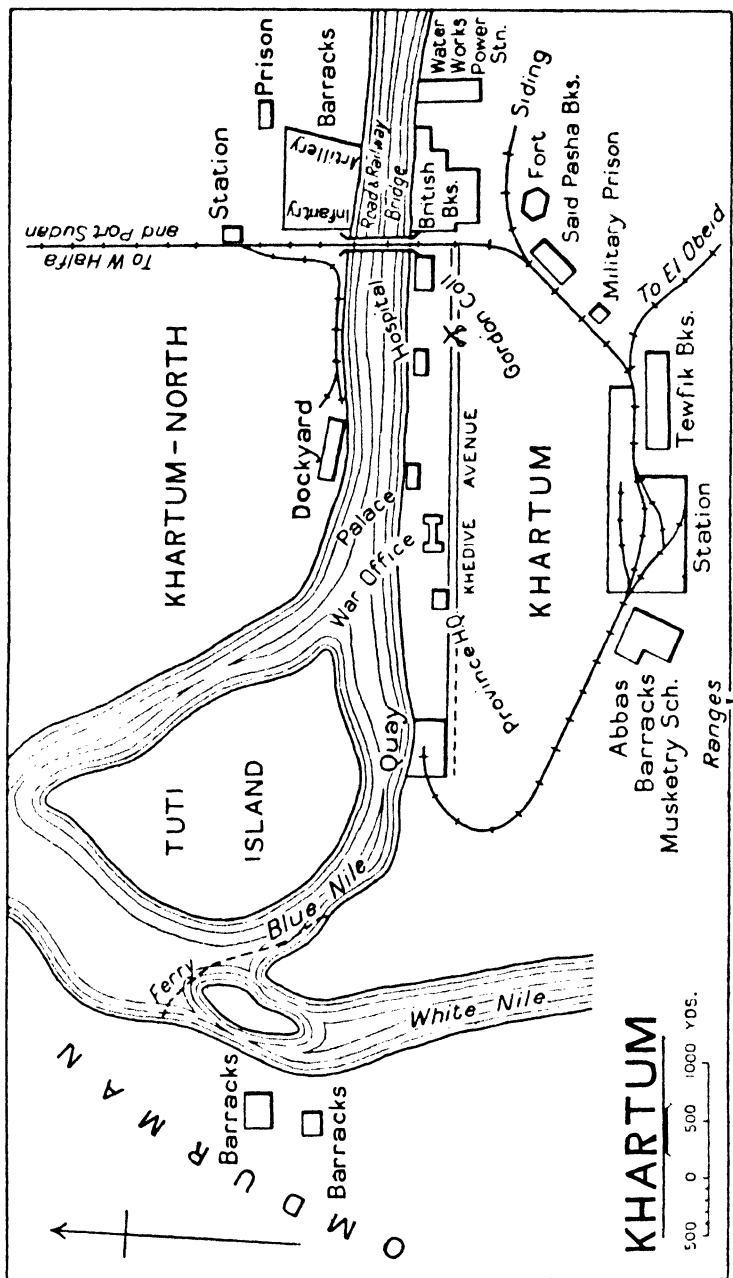
Moreover, in consequence of the withdrawal of the Egyptians and the preoccupation of British troops in supervising the evacuation, Sudanese had to be entrusted with the task of finding normal guards over Government property and maintenance of law and order among the civil population, which might well be worked into a state of excitement by the events.

Apart from the question of the adequacy of the force at his disposal to carry out the order, the personal problems of the acting Sirdar were even more difficult. He had a threefold responsibility. As Sirdar he commanded the Egyptian Army and was responsible to the Egyptian Government for the conduct and efficiency of Egyptian troops; yet, as commander of the British garrison in the Sudan he was called on to give orders which Egyptian troops must resent as contrary to the will of the Egyptian Government, and which they might, with some show of reason, refuse to obey. His third and perhaps his greatest responsibility was for law and order in the Sudan, and the security of British and native lives not concerned in the dispute. The result of the orders he was called on to give might well be to imperil internal security. Clearly great tact and judgment would be required not only from the Sirdar but also from the British officers who would be called on to overcome any show of resistance on the part of the Egyptian troops during the process of covering their entrainment and of escorting them out of the country. Regarding the Sudanese troops, nothing could be done. They re-



mained a somewhat uncertain quantity, and the wisest course was to continue to show confidence in them and avoid unsettling them by any indications of suspicion.

Huddleston Pasha, on receipt of his instructions, decided that he must move British troops into positions which would render any resistance on the part of the Egyptians hopeless before he communicated the decision to them. He fully realised that the Egyptian troops might refuse to obey orders; and if controlling force was not immediately available, any delay in producing it would give them time to organise resistance and draw ammunition. A collision in which many Egyptian and British lives would be lost would then almost certainly occur. He accordingly at once called a conference of British officers concerned and issued orders to them to make the necessary dispositions. They were warned, however, to move their troops as unostentatiously as possible, and as far as circumstances permitted to keep their men out of sight, so as to avoid unnecessary display of force. When these steps had been taken, orders for the evacuation were put into force. The 4th Egyptian Battalion with some hesitation obeyed and were entrained for Port Sudan by 24th November, but the artillery and 3rd Egyptians refused to entrain without a direct order from their own Government. No attempt was made to use force to compel immediate obedience; such a course would almost inevitably have resulted in loss of life; for although they had little ammunition, the troops to be evacuated, in accordance with special instructions given by Lord Allenby, had not been disarmed. As an alternative, in order to relieve the troops of their scruples and to satisfy their sense of



honour, a telegram was sent to Cairo asking that confirmation of the Sirdar's order should be obtained from the Egyptian authorities. During the consequent delay, however, an unexpected and very serious mutiny occurred in the 11th Sudanese Battalion in Khartum, and another less serious in the 10th Sudanese at Talodi in the Nuba Hills. The situation was complicated, too, by a mutiny among the political prisoners in the prison at Khartum North, which could not be effectually crushed while the Egyptian troops were awaiting entrainment.

It is certain that in Khartum the outbreaks were instigated by Egyptian officers waiting entrainment, and were a result of a conspiracy at the head of which was Rifaat Bey, a senior artillery officer.

The main object of the conspiracy was to bring about a Sudanese mutiny in furtherance of the policy which aimed at showing that the sympathies of the Sudan were pro-Egyptian and anti-British. Although the conspirators promised the Sudanese direct support by the Egyptian units assembled for entrainment at Khartum North, it is doubtful whether there was a real intention on the part of the latter to commit themselves. The British machine guns covering them were a restraining influence, but the timely arrival of an instruction from the Minister of War to comply with the evacuation order may have proved the decisive factor in preventing active participation. Enquiries subsequent to the mutiny revealed, however, that the Sudanese mutineers had received definite promise of support, especially from the artillery, which were to fire across the river at the British barracks, Government buildings and other highly vulnerable points, when shooting started in Khartum itself.

Before giving an account in detail of what happened, it is well to remind readers how small was the British force available to deal with such a critical situation. There were still only the two battalions at Khartum, weakened by detachments on the railway; and although a third battalion was now on its way from Egypt, it was not due to arrive at Port Sudan till 26th November—two days later.

Much the most serious event was the mutiny in the 11th Sudanese, but in point of time it was preceded by the outbreak in the prison, which will therefore be described first. For some time the prison had been a source of trouble as, in addition to ordinary criminals, it contained many whose offences were connected with the political agitation. Chief among the latter were cadets, arrested on account of the August disturbance, and they had proved very truculent, especially after a visit paid to them early in November by an Egyptian officer who was acting as "prisoners' friend" to those still awaiting trial. Even as early as 18th November, before the murder of Sir Lee Stack occurred, the political prisoners were in a mutinous and highly excited state, so much so, that it was thought advisable to transfer a number of ordinary prisoners to gaols at Port Sudan. Order was temporarily restored by persuasion and the grant of some small concessions, but a spark only was required to cause a conflagration, and this the news of the repatriation of Egyptian units provided. The close proximity of the prison to the artillery barracks facilitated signalling between the two groups of buildings and ensured early communication of the news under most inflammatory conditions.

In consequence disturbances again broke out on

23rd November, but it was not till 6.30 A.M. on the 24th that the situation became out of hand. Order could easily have been restored by shooting, as a prison guard from a Sudanese battalion under a British officer had replaced that previously furnished by Egyptian troops. To have resorted to shooting would, however, almost certainly have led to an immediate outbreak in the artillery barracks, a very serious complication. Throughout the next few days, therefore, the situation inside the prison was not brought under complete control, and signalling to the artillery barracks could not be stopped. It was, however, possible to segregate the mutinous from well-behaved prisoners and to make the position secure against any attempts at escape. On the repatriation of Egyptian troops, order was restored without difficulty, but the prison staff had had a trying and anxious time.

The next event to indicate how precarious was the general situation took place at Talodi in the Nuba Hills, some 170 miles south of El Obeid, on 25th November, when orders for the repatriation of Egyptian officers were received. Not only did the Egyptian officers refuse to surrender, but certain of the Sudanese officers demanded also to be evacuated to Egypt. When arrested these officers broke out again and attempted to cause a mutiny in the two companies of the 10th Sudanese forming the garrison. There were two British officers only at the station, and though they were able to dissuade the troops from violent action and were themselves left unmolested and at liberty, they could not prevent the mutinous officers taking command of the troops. An immediate attempt to force the issue might well have cost the officers their lives and have led only to the troops committing

themselves more deeply and to a general worsening of the position. The problem presented must have been desperately difficult and unpleasant.

To suppress this outbreak eight armoured cars, 500 men (three companies) of the Camel Corps and some Lewis gunners from the British detachment were immediately despatched from El Obeid, while other Lewis and machine gunners of the Leicesters with Ford cars were sent by steamer and road from Khartum to support them. This show of force proved sufficient and no resistance was offered, but the incident proved how little Sudanese battalions could be relied on.

At Khartum further proof was given by the mutiny of the 11th Sudanese, which had more serious consequences.

Brought from Omdurman to Khartum in order to take over guard duties consequent on the evacuation of Egyptian units, this battalion on the 27th November was finding a guard of one platoon at the War Office, another on the military prison (not to be confused with the prison at Khartum North where the cadets were) and two platoons were in Said Pasha Barracks (*vide* sketch plan of Khartum). The moving spirits were the Sudanese officers in charge of the two latter detachments, who were prepared to give effect to the plot planned by Rifaat Bey and other Egyptian officers. They were in touch with another group of disaffected officers at the musketry school, and this school was the meeting-place of disaffected elements in Khartum itself. Final decision to take action was arrived at apparently about noon on the 27th, waverers being induced to believe that the moment had come by a false report that a platoon of 9th Sudanese, find-

ing a guard on the bridge, had mutinied, and that the artillery were ready to open fire as soon as the first shots were heard in Khartum.

The sequence of events was as follows:

At 3 P.M. the officer in charge of the military prison took steps in readiness to release military prisoners, which was part of the plan.

At 3.30 the two platoons at Said Pasha Barracks were paraded and marched to the prison where they were joined by the platoon on guard there. Thence the whole party marched to the musketry school where they were joined by four officers of various units. The magazine was broken into and two Vickers guns with ammunition were taken. Making their way through the market, where a native cart was commandeered, the mutineers moved towards the War Office, apparently intending to pick up the platoon there. This platoon was under the command of a Sudanese officer, who, from his demeanour, would appear to have had every intention of joining the mutineers. Fortunately, before he had time to take action, a British officer on the Headquarters Staff of the Egyptian Army, on duty at the War Office, appreciating the situation, ordered the men to fall in and marched them rapidly to the bridge before they had time to fully understand what was happening.

Meanwhile Mr. Carless, Assistant District Commissioner, Khartum, who had met and been threatened by the mutineers on their way through the market, had hastened to the War Office where he found the acting Sirdar, Huddleston Pasha. The latter, when Mr. Carless' report had been confirmed by an orderly who stated he had seen Sudanese soldiers moving towards the British barracks, immediately despatched Colonel

McCowan (Officer Commanding Khartum District, Egyptian Army) by car to ascertain what was happening. At the same time he telephoned to warn the Leicesters in the British barracks and the Argylls at the Gordon College to sound the alarm and stand to. It was now about 4.30 P.M. Colonel McCowan drove first to the bridge to warn the guards there, and returning by the Khedive Avenue found the Argylls already turning out and taking position across the road. Proceeding westwards he met the mutineers, who had been somewhat delayed by their endeavours to seduce the platoon at the War Office, on the Khedive Avenue some 700 yards from the Gordon College near the military hospital.

The party were halted by their officers and Colonel McCowan spoke to them, endeavouring to induce them to return to their barracks, warning them they would be fired on if they advanced further. Colonel McCowan was personally well known to the mutinous troops, as Omdurman was included in the Khartum district and they therefore were part of his command. The men would probably have obeyed his orders if the officers had not interfered; but the officers told him that they were on their way to join "their brothers of the 3rd Battalion," and threatened him with their revolvers. They did not fire, however, and he was able to get away safely by the road along the river, and reported to Huddleston Pasha. The latter then set out in his car to take personal charge of the situation threatening to develop at the Gordon College, and finding Major Couper of the Argylls, he ordered him to reinforce his party on the Khedive Avenue with six Vickers guns, all that were available. By the time this was done it was almost dark.



Huddleston Pasha now went forward alone to meet the Sudanese, calling to them that he was the Sirdar. Receiving no reply, he continued to advance till within about sixty yards of them. He called again that he was Huddleston Pasha. This time the reply came in an officer's voice, "We do not know Huddleston Pasha, we only know Rifaat Pasha". Huddleston Pasha then said, "Will you take my orders?" The same voice answered, "We will only take Rifaat Pasha's orders".

On this he returned to the Argylls and immediately, at about 6 P.M., ordered fire with all machine guns to be opened. The fire was answered by the Sudanese but the shooting was erratic and caused no casualties.

Platoons of the Argylls and Leicesters now advanced down both sides of the Avenue, outflanking the mutineers who broke up, leaving their two machine guns on the road where they were recovered by the platoon of the Leicesters working along the north side of the road. Although the Sudanese had broken, they continued firing from what cover they could find in the darkness, and it was not till 10 o'clock that fire ceased on both sides. During the night the majority of the mutineers scattered, some making their way back to Omdurman. It was hoped that in the morning there would be no further resistance, but, as was subsequently found, a very determined remnant was left to be dealt with.

Meanwhile deplorable events had taken place in the hospital close to the scene of the encounter. Major Carlyle, the senior medical officer, when he heard firing, ordered wards to be prepared for the wounded and sent two British N.C.O.'s to bring stretchers from the store. At the store the N.C.O.'s found a Sudanese

sentry who did not interfere with them while removing stretchers; but inside they discovered Sergeant Renshaw dying, having apparently been attacked by the sentry. One of the N.C.O.'s (Sergeant Perkins) ran at once with two stretchers to report to Major Carlyle and, when re-entering the hospital, was accosted by a Sudanese officer with a revolver. Pushing the stretchers into the officer's face, Sergeant Perkins ran inside to Major Carlyle. He was almost immediately followed by the officer, who, threatening Major Carlyle with his revolver, ordered him to get out. Pretending not to hear, Major Carlyle closed with and threw the officer, Sergeant Perkins securing his revolver arm. While the three were struggling on the ground a party of Sudanese came in and fired, killing Major Carlyle and wounding Sergeant Perkins. All this must have happened soon after shooting on the Avenue commenced, though it is not known exactly when Sergeant Renshaw was murdered.

At dawn the following morning the British troops advanced to search for the mutineers, not in much expectation of opposition. When, however, they approached the Medical Corps Compound adjoining the hospital, firing broke out. The compound contains a number of small buildings, and great difficulty was experienced in locating where the fire was coming from. Several casualties occurred, including two British officers killed, and it was eventually found that the mutineers had taken refuge in the Egyptian officers' mess, a building surrounded by small trees.

This party put up a desperate resistance. Bombing and machine gun fire had no effect, so the single 4.5" howitzer on charge at the Fort was brought up at 8 A.M. and fired 30 rounds at 100 yards range. Even

this proved insufficient, and an attempt to rush the building resulted only in further casualties.

In the end slow fire from the howitzer had to be continued for seven hours, 170 rounds being fired before the building was entirely demolished and all sign of resistance ended. None of the desperate garrison was found alive.

One cannot withhold one's admiration and regret for these men, fanatical though no doubt they were, who had been seduced from their allegiance, and then deserted by their Egyptian co-religionists.

With the suppression of this mutiny peace was again established in the Sudan, and by the 4th December the last Egyptian unit had left the country, followed as soon as distances would allow by such Egyptian officers as were stationed at outlying points.

The enquiries and courts-martial which were held all confirmed how completely Egypt was responsible for the outbreak and how little it was inspired by any genuine desire on the part of the Sudanese for closer union with Egypt.

Malakal and Talodi were the farthest points at which the virus of Egyptian propaganda produced serious results. All the irregular Arab units proved quite reliable, and even Sudanese battalions with their percentage of Egyptian officers were unaffected in the Equatorial provinces, if we exclude the abortive trouble at Wau. The morale of the Sudanese battalions was, however, so shaken that it was probably wise to make a fresh start in the new Sudan defence force and to include in it none of the old units. The truth is that the Sudanese black man is, as Egyptians well know, easily worked on. He is credulous and simple-minded

to a degree, and his religious fanaticism is easily aroused. With all his gallantry and his genuine affection for his British officers, he is in times of peace a dangerous custodian of law and order if there are subversive influences about.

With such combustible material, and taking account of the inflammatory influences at work, a single British battalion was a perilously small fire extinguisher. It was fortunate indeed that the mutiny of the Railway Battalion in August had led to the reinforcement of the garrison and that the chain of Mediterranean garrisons, capable of mutually supporting each other, enabled reinforcements to be provided quickly in response to successive calls.

It is well, however, to recognise the risk that was taken and the element of chance which accounted for the presence of the Argylls in Khartum. Financial pressure and political conditions produce demands for the reduction of overseas garrisons, and there must always be a tendency to estimate the minimum strength required by purely local conditions, and to lose sight of the factor of mutual support. A local crisis is apt to come as a bolt from the blue, and if reinforcements do not arrive promptly a serious disaster may easily occur.

It may be claimed as a justification of the weakness of the British garrison in the Sudan that great confidence was felt in Sudanese troops, and that as an element of risk, Sudanese and Egyptian troops cancelled each other. If that view was held it was not justified by history. In 1900 an incident occurred which foreshadowed the events of 1924, and although, owing to the South African War, it attracted little notice at the time, may be recalled here. The Khedive,

Abbas Hilmi, always hostile to British control, seized the opportunity provided by the South African War to foment trouble in the Sudan, from which many senior British officers of the Egyptian Army had departed for South Africa. His technique was very similar to that employed in 1924, though more secretive. His aim was, through Egyptian officers, to stir Sudanese battalions into mutiny, and he so far succeeded that an outbreak did occur in the same 11th Sudanese Battalion. Fortunately the outbreak was premature and the plot was revealed by some of the old Sudanese officers who were loyal. The element of young and excitable Sudanese officers had not then been developed, and the Egyptian officers concerned in the plot relied more on stirring up the fanaticism, and working on the credulity, of the Sudanese rank and file than on securing the co-operation of Sudanese officers. Prompt arrests were made and the plot broke down. Enquiries revealed, however, how seriously the mutiny might have developed. Only during winter months was there then a British garrison at Khartum, and at other times British Egyptian Army officers would have been at the mercy of their men. As it happened, the fate of the mutiny to some extent turned on how far mercy would be shown. Many of the Egyptian officers who were approached by the Khedive's agents had no feeling of hostility towards their British officers, though they were willing enough to take action which would open the Sudan to unchecked exploitation by Egypt. The fate of the British officers became therefore a matter of controversy among the conspirators: one party advocated their murder, others that they should be collected and deported. One very senior and highly

educated Egyptian officer who was on particular friendly terms with senior British officers was approached and consulted. His advice was quite firm. "No British officers must be left alive; if 100 of them are collected for deportation they will undoubtedly regain control." This belief in the initiative of others and lack of confidence in their own marked the action of Egyptian officers again in 1924.

Abortive though it was, the mutiny of 1900 had many features in common with that of 1924, and one wonders how far it was forgotten when Egyptian efforts to undermine the loyalty of the Sudan threatened danger. For the future, now that subversive external influences are removed, the Sudan defence force should be able to produce troops of the same quality as the old Sudanese battalions and with an officer cadre of undivided loyalty. Still, the steadying influence of a British garrison is always likely to be required.

Although the mutinies recorded may all be ascribed to Egyptian political influences, it is fair to examine whether there was any element of what might be classified as contributory negligence on the part of British authorities which gave the subversive influences an opportunity.

Three possible contributory causes may be noted.

The first was that in 1919 Egyptian officers who showed mutinous tendencies during the outbreak in Egypt were treated with a leniency which may have been mistaken for timidity, and certainly appeared to minimise the seriousness of the offence. Secondly, we had accepted a law passed by the Egyptian Government which provided that, by April 1927, all foreign

officers, with a few special exceptions, should be retired from Egyptian service. Acceptance of the law did not, of course, apply to those British officers serving in the Egyptian Army in the Sudan, but no specific reservation on the subject was made; and the fact that at the time those officers whose contracts expired were not being replaced, may have inspired false hopes in Egypt as to the future of the Sudan. At the date of the outbreak, this policy, which was presumably merely in the interests of economy, had left the Egyptian Army in the Sudan thirty short of its establishment of British officers, and steps which had been initiated to remedy the reduction had not yet matured. A third factor which contributed to the mutiny arose from the fact that, after the reconquest of the country, enlistment in the Sudanese battalions was for a long time at a standstill. This presumably was due in part to a desire to reward good service, and partly to the absence of any threatening dangers. The result, however, was that by 1917 some 80 per cent of the other ranks were unfit for active service owing to age, and consequently a large number of young recruits were enlisted within a short period. Among these were many Nubas from South Kordofan, physically very fine men and to all appearance excellent material. Individually they actually were first class, but away from their own district they displayed a strongly marked clannishness, so that if one Nuba in a battalion had a grievance or was giving trouble all the others followed suit, and there were practically no old soldiers left to have a steadying effect.

The moral, I think, to be drawn from these three contributory causes is that one's intention should

be firmly and clearly expressed and acted up to, and that economy and over-confidence can be pushed to dangerous extremes.

It has, I hope, been shown that the regrettable mutinies, so far as they occurred in Sudanese units, were all the work of officers and were not the result of grievances among the men or in the indigenous civil population. The lesson that seems to stand out is the necessity of checking strictly political propaganda which makes a special appeal to the native officer class. The higher, though limited education of the class renders it more approachable. It has ambitions which can be played on, and it is sensitive to slights, however unintentional. The relations between a foreign officer and the rank and file of a native army are comparatively simple and depend on elementary human factors. Those between the foreign and native officer are much more complex.

It is easy for a foreign officer who is confident in his own influence over his men to forget how much influence can be exercised by native officers whom the men appear to look up to in a less degree. They have channels of connection which are closed to the foreign officer.

The tendency to ignore the native officer or to treat him merely as an unavoidable necessity, a mere detail of the mechanism, offends his *amour propre* and renders him sensitive to hostile political influences. The British officer who comes in contact with native troops for the first time finds his approach to the men so easy that the temptation to ignore the importance of the native officer and to fail to establish sound relations with him is great.

It is not implied that the defection of Egyptian and



Sudanese officers was due to inconsiderate treatment by British officers. The point to which I wish to direct attention is the influence which even junior native officers exercised over their men when in opposition to British officers. When men are in a state of excitement, racial feelings come into play which at other times are masked.

The first outbreak in the Railway Battalion at Atbara was in a different category from the other events. Although under military discipline, the battalion was little more than a labour corps. The outbreak was analogous to an outbreak of rioting among the employees of a Government railway, and its importance, apart from the political aspect, lay in its threat to interrupt railway communications.

The problem was neither that of dispersing the riotous mob nor of dealing with a mutiny of armed or even fully trained men.

To get the men back to their barracks, as was done, was clearly quite the correct course. The point arises whether it would have been better to restrain the attempts to break out again by a threat of shooting rather than by physical contact. The rule that physical contact between troops and an excited mob should be avoided, if possible, is based quite as much on the difficulty of maintaining control of the troops when their blood is up in the excitement of a *mêlée* as on the danger of their being overwhelmed by numbers. Normally also mutineers should be cowed and made to realise the enormity of their offence by the threat of fire backing the issue of orders. It was presumably the exceptional nature of the Railway Battalion which suggested the departure from ordinary practice, but

the departure produced a hand-to-hand scuffle and resulted in the troops firing without orders.

It is worth noting in this connection that the Egyptian units assembled for deportation and the Sudanese at Talodi, although armed, were successfully cowed by the threat of the use of fire. Possibly if there had been sufficient light for the 11th Sudanese to see how much fire power Huddleston Pasha had at his back, they also would have been cowed and have taken his orders. As it was, Huddleston Pasha, having at great personal risk made his appeal, was fully justified in firing at once when his orders were disregarded. The problem in that case was the purely military one of overcoming armed resistance to orders as decisively and quickly as possible. Hesitation would almost certainly have led to a conflict on a much larger scale. Complete darkness must have added enormously to the difficulties of the situation and its approach made the need for immediate decisive action all the more imperative. To have left an armed force free to move about during the night after successfully defying authority and with such opportunities of mischief would have been courting disaster.

The extraordinarily difficult problems with which Huddleston Pasha was confronted when ordered to carry out the evacuation of the Egyptian officers have already been indicated, and the amount of tact and human understanding required to produce a satisfactory solution to them is manifest.

As far as the conditions permitted, everything was done to avoid wounding the susceptibilities or affronting the honour of the Egyptians. At the same time, it was essential to make plain to them that active resistance was hopeless. The passive resistance offered was

sympathetically dealt with and the steps taken to have the orders for the evacuation confirmed from Egypt were generous and prudent. Lord Allenby's decision not to disarm the troops was perhaps risky, the more so as it was taken at a distance, but it was a concession to their sense of military honour and removed an excuse for active resistance. Hasty action by the acting Sirdar to enforce immediate compliance with the orders could hardly have failed to have caused bloodshed which would have embittered for years all relations with Egypt and have caused excitement locally. The outbreak among the Sudanese gives an indication of what might have happened.

It is legitimate to wonder how far Lord Allenby and the Home Government realised the full difficulty of the task they had given the acting Sirdar. The political situation demanded prompt and drastic action which left little opportunity for consultation with Sudan authorities. Pursuing the speculation a step further, one may ask, Would the same orders have been issued if the British garrison had not already been reinforced by the Argylls? Could they have been given effect to safely, with the backing of a single battalion only, especially if the 4th Battalion had taken a stand as firmly as the other Egyptian units? We are a lucky nation, but those who would like to cut down our insurance premium should recognise how far we have won through by luck. We cannot expect luck always to hold.

Khartum on the night of 27th November presents a dramatic scene. On the one bank of the Nile we see British troops exercising restraint, courtesy and tact, ready to spring but effacing themselves and avoiding anything which would cause irritation or further

embitter feeling. On the other bank a few hundred yards away troops are in action using every weapon they can bring to bear to hunt down and exterminate active opposition. Between lies the Nile bridge guarded by Sudanese, still loyal to their British officers in an association whose death warrant was being signed by the events on either hand.

## APPENDIX

### *The Egyptian Army and Sudan Defence Force*

After the collapse of Arabi Pasha's rebellion in 1882, the old Egyptian Army was disbanded and a new one formed under the command of Sir Evelyn Wood, recruited in numbers proportionate to population in each of the provinces, on a ballot system. Originally eight Egyptian battalions were formed, but in the course of the long wars with the Khalifa this number was increased and Sudanese battalions raised, till in 1898 a maximum of twelve Egyptian and six Sudanese battalions was reached with a small force of cavalry and artillery in addition. Egyptian troops were in the nature of conscripts, but Sudanese units were recruited on a different basis, very largely from prisoners or deserters from the Khalifa's armies, who willingly accepted service. Both Egyptian and Sudanese were essentially regular troops drilled to the steadiness required to deal with the Khalifa's fanatical masses, and it was not till after the reconquest of the Sudan that the need for more mobile and cheaper irregular troops, depending on a simpler mechanism of administration, arose.

With the exception of four of the original Egyptian battalions which were entirely officered by Egyptians,

the senior officers in all units, Egyptian and Sudanese, were British, and all the principal Staff appointments were similarly filled. British officers never held a rank lower than that of Bimbashi (Major), and never served under Egyptian superiors. In Sudanese battalions the great majority of junior officers were Egyptians trained at the military school in Cairo, though a certain number of Sudanese were promoted from the ranks.

Following on the reconquest of the Sudan the Army was considerably reduced and most of the Egyptian units returned to their stations in Egypt, leaving the Sudanese to form the bulk of the garrison of the former country, especially in outlying districts. British and Egyptian officers were drawn from the Army to organise and carry on the administration of the country till they could gradually be replaced by a civilian regime; young Sudanese too were educated to replace by degrees Egyptians as junior officers in the Sudanese battalions.

Although its task had now completely changed in nature, the "regular" characteristics of the Army were retained. The only units added of a somewhat different character were an Equatorial battalion recruited from the pagan tribes of the south for service in that area, an Eastern Arab Corps formed on the basis of a unit taken over from the Italians when Kassala was handed back to the Sudan by Italy, and a Western Arab Corps formed consequent on the occupation of Darfur in 1916.

This latter event removed the last prospect of large-scale military operations in the Sudan and it became apparent that in future mobility to enable incipient trouble to be nipped in the bud was the attribute mainly required in the Army. Some steps had already been taken in this direction when the events recorded in this chapter provided an opportunity for much more drastic reorganisation unhampered by vested interests. Not only were all the Egyptian elements of the

Army withdrawn from the Sudan, but the Sudanese battalions were also disbanded and an entirely new military organisation called the Sudan Defence Force was brought into being, owing allegiance only to the Governor-General.

The new force has much more the characteristics of a powerful military police than of a regular army. Its organisation is on an area basis and the troops in each area are of the type demanded by the physical features of the area and the characteristics of its inhabitants. Uniformity has gone by the board, and each of the six areas into which the country is divided has its special corps, each differing from the others and each consisting of a suitable number of companies of varying types. The company of from 150 to 200 men (commanded by a British officer) has, in fact, become the tactical unit whether it is an infantry, camel, mule or horse company. The men are in most units enlisted as irregulars, that is to say they provide their own rations and accommodation though their training and equipment is similar to that of regulars. The general result of this organisation is a highly mobile force which lends itself to the formation of detachments required in controlling wide areas and to rapid reinforcement in the event of trouble. A high proportion of machine guns provides the force with plenty of fire power when necessary.

The small British garrison at Khartum gives a stable foundation to the military structure and the potentialities of the Royal Air Force complete it.

## CHAPTER VIII

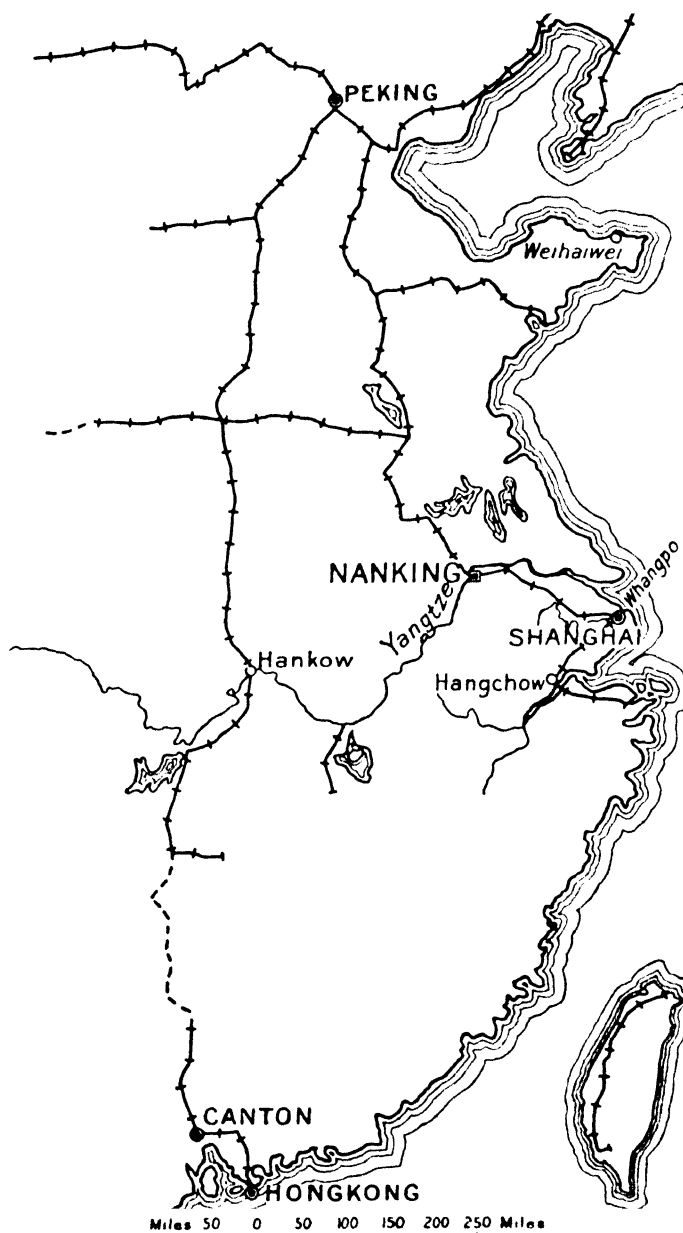
### THE SHANGHAI DEFENCE FORCE, 1927

THE organisation and despatch of the Shanghai defence force is a remarkable illustration of the principle that an early display of armed force is the surest way to minimise the danger of having to exercise force.

As a consequence of timely action not only were lives and property made safe but a real danger of military operations on a large scale, of a magnitude impossible to forecast, was averted. The very success of the measure left little for the troops to do; their presence at the critical moment was sufficient to accomplish the object for which they were despatched. The interest of the incident lies, not in the problems presented to the troops, but in those presented to the Government and to the authorities controlling the Army both at home and locally. The history of the development of the crisis, through its various complex phases, shows how unexpectedly a comparatively minor conflagration may flare up suddenly, necessitating a change of policy and rapid decision; and the Army appears in its primary role as a necessary complement to diplomacy in the prevention of war.

The danger which led to the despatch of the force arose partly from the events of the civil war in China which brought Shanghai into the zone of fighting, and partly from a growing hostility to the privileged position occupied by Western nations in China, especially marked in one of the combatants. In order

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to understand the situation in China at the time it is necessary to recall the origin of both these causes.

After the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1912 the attempt to maintain an effective central government at Peking soon broke down. By degrees the provincial governments fell into the hands of a number of practically independent War Lords, maintaining armies which they employed to further their personal ambitions and for their own enrichment. The bewildering permutations and combinations of the civil war in which they engaged need not be followed. It was marked by the formation of groups constantly fluctuating in constitution as defections or accessions occurred.

In the south, however, a local government of a different character and with different ideals was formed at Canton. As early as 1911, under the leadership of Sun Yat-Sen, Canton became the headquarters of a national revolutionary government which aimed at establishing a new order of things in China. Prepared at first to throw in its lot with the Government at Peking, it soon found that there was little common ground and resumed its independence. Its leaders were influenced by Western ideas and many of them had been educated in America or England. They dreamt of China developing as Japan had done into a world Power, adapting its ancient civilisation to modern conditions and ridding itself of all restrictions which implied inferiority of status. Superimposed on the Chinese racial aversion to foreigners was a determination to secure recognition of equality with other nations and abolition of special privileges and concessions which had been obtained from China under pressure of force.

Racial consciousness was no new thing in China; but its spread gained impetus from events and movements taking place in other parts of the world as the result of post-war settlements. Naturally the elements in China in closest touch, through their education, with Western ideas were most affected; and the Government at Canton soon showed a tendency to give practical effect to its ideals.

Britain, as the Power primarily responsible for securing special privileges for foreigners, became the target which that Government selected for attack. The attack took the form of a boycott of British trade and disputes in connection with the Anglo-French Concession at Canton. These led to much friction with the commercial community and British Government representatives at Hong Kong.

Anti-British feeling after the war was intensified by the fact that Soviet Russia had established close relations with the Cantonese Government. The Soviet Government was only too anxious to find a field in which the interests of the capitalist Powers could be damaged; more especially as that field also provided an opportunity for counteracting such influence as the remnants of the White Russian Armies might acquire in the Far East. Russia therefore not only became a source of munitions supply for Canton but it also provided a mission charged with the task of organising the Army and resources of the Canton Government. The mission, in addition to its other tasks, naturally did everything in its power to inoculate the Chinese with its communist doctrine, and also taught the technique of propaganda. The Chinese, being by nature a highly individualistic race, did not receive communistic doctrines with much enthusiasm, but the

Cantonese leaders were not slow to perceive that communist propaganda would provide a weapon to employ against foreign interests, for these depended to a very great extent on docile Chinese labour.

For a few years the Canton Government took no aggressive part in Chinese affairs beyond its efforts to undermine the position of the British at Hong Kong. Guided by its Russian advisers, however, it steadily consolidated its position, bringing neighbouring War Lords, with their armies, to heel and establishing a definite system of army training.

By 1926 these measures had produced results and the Canton Government found itself in possession of an army which, although it possessed no remarkable fighting qualities, had at least a measure of discipline and unity. It consequently felt itself strong enough to extend its sphere of action and to embark on an attempt to establish control over the whole of China. Advancing north, its armies met with a great measure of success, chiefly by the skilful use of money and propaganda rather than by fighting. This is usual in China, where armies are employed rather to occupy territory won by the former means than to inflict decisive defeats on their enemies.

Commanded by Chiang Kai-Shek, the Cantonese Army reached the Yangtse at Hankow in September 1926. To oppose its further advance, a group of northern War Lords had been formed; though, as was customary in the civil war, others were sitting on the fence ready to take advantage of the opportunities which might be opened by the results of the main struggle. The Northern group, held together by somewhat indefinite ties, was headed by Chang Tso-lin, the Ruler of Manchuria, who had moved south

and established himself at Peking. This group included the army of Sun Chuan-fang who controlled the provinces astride the lower Yangtse and was in consequence directly responsible for the security of Shanghai. To the north of Sun, also in the group, were the armies of Shantung province under Chang Tsung-chang, a leader who had an evil reputation for avarice and violence.

Such was broadly the condition of affairs in China in the autumn of 1926, and it was evident that Shanghai might be exposed to a double danger if the Canton Army gained further successes. A nearer approach of that army with its anti-foreign doctrines, backed by a well-organised propaganda service, would endanger the internal security of the Settlement, while collisions in the neighbourhood between the Chinese armies might lead to an influx of undisciplined soldiery. Shanghai had had experience of the latter danger in 1924-25 during the course of conflicts between local War Lords. It remains to examine how far the Settlement was vulnerable to such risks and what measures were taken to meet them.

Events of recent years have made the conditions under which Shanghai has grown and now exists fairly familiar; but the facts connected with it, which added so greatly to the difficulty of the problems to be dealt with, may be briefly reviewed.

Although it owed its origin to the enterprise of British merchants, at an early stage of its history Shanghai acquired, to a unique degree, an international character. France alone holds a separate Concession; the rest of the Foreign Settlement is held under an international agreement with China and, although British interests and influence have retained

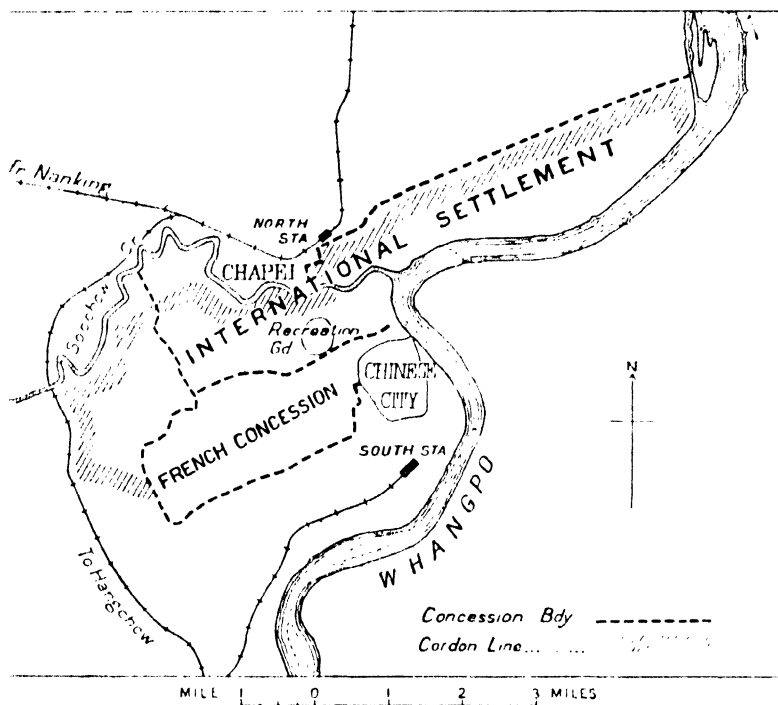
an acknowledged paramountcy in the Settlement, the British Government has no special responsibilities in connection with the conduct of its administration or with its defence.

The government and administration are in the hands of an international Municipal Council which maintains touch with the Governments of the various nationals represented, through the Consular Service. The Municipal Council provides its own police force, which in emergencies has the backing of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps. The latter force in 1927 had been increased to a strength of approximately 80 officers and 1400 other ranks, and included small bodies of mounted troops, artillery and engineers. Its commanding officer and adjutant are seconded officers of the British Army lent to the Municipal Council; an arrangement justified by the predominance of British interests. The remaining officers are commissioned by the Shanghai Municipal Council. The force is well trained and highly efficient, the local knowledge of its personnel being of special value in dealing with internal disturbances.

Behind the Volunteer Corps again, the Council is able to rely with confidence on assistance provided by landing-parties of naval ratings and marines from the warships of all nations stationed in Chinese waters. Under normal conditions a reinforcement from this source may be estimated at about 1200 rifles.

The total force thus available is adequate to cope with local disturbances, and in 1924-25, when the internal situation was quiet, it also proved sufficient to supply a system of Cordon posts established to prevent the entry into the Settlement of a disorganised

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rabble of Chinese soldiers seeking refuge after defeat. It was fully appreciated, however, on that occasion that the force would have been insufficient to deal with a simultaneous threat of internal disorder and of incursions from outside.

A grave disadvantage under which the protective organisation labours lies in the constitution of the Volunteer force. Apart from its White Russian units its members are all connected with business or the permanent organisation of the administration of the Settlement. The force cannot therefore be kept on duty over a prolonged period without serious interruption of the normal life of the community.

The inadequacy of security measures to meet a danger from outside will be the more apparent when one examines the nature of the area and of its inhabitants for which the Municipal Council is responsible.

Including, as one must, the French Concession, the area stretches for some eleven miles along the left bank of the Whangpo River and varies in depth from two miles to one quarter of a mile. In addition, owing to the growth of the town, both the Municipal Council and many individual foreigners have acquired property in Chinese territory beyond the Settlement boundary, both for residential and business purposes. For example, the many shipping and other businesses established on the right bank of the river lie outside the Settlement, and the residential area, which lies in the western portion of the Settlement, has extended beyond its boundaries as far as the Hangchow Railway. The Cordon line established in 1924 was fixed so as to protect the bulk of the outlying property, and in consequence the line selected had a length of

twenty-one miles, including a section of five miles covering the French Concession.

It may be pointed out here that, although the French Concession is a separate entity and its safety the responsibility of the French Government, it cannot be ignored in measures of protection. The actual French garrison is very small, and although it can be reinforced fairly easily by troops from Indo-China, yet in an emergency the interests of the two Settlements are inseparable: the more so as nearly 80 per cent of the foreign community in the French Concession are of British or American nationality. In 1925 the French Concession actually suffered from the incursion of a rabble, and in consequence permanent means of closing the principal entrances into it have been constructed.

The nature of the population of Shanghai and its distribution present an even greater difficulty than the extent of the area it occupies. The International Settlement contains roughly one million inhabitants, of whom only some 36,000 are foreigners. Not only is the foreign population widely distributed but it does not arrange itself in any recognisable national groups, either for business or residential purposes. Furthermore, not only does the Settlement contain many great Chinese business undertakings but it has become a favourite place for Chinese officials and others, who legitimately or otherwise have made their fortunes, to settle in. The whole constitutes an extraordinarily mixed community of great wealth; a happy-hunting-ground for a mob intent on loot, and one in which the forces of law and order are beset with difficulties in exercising protective duties. Maintenance of the vital services of light, communications, sanitation, etc., all



operated by Chinese labour, is a grave cause of anxiety in case of internal disturbances. Difficult as are the problems of administration and protection in the Settlement itself, they are infinitely complicated by the contiguity on its southern and northern sides respectively, of the Chinese city and the Chinese suburb of Chapei, which together hold a population of nearly 1½ millions. Over these the Municipal Council has no authority; they are purely Chinese and as such a legitimate objective for Chinese armies in civil war.

It is evident that this strange and complicated overlapping of interests and responsibility can work only if the relations between the Municipal Council on the one hand and the Chinese authorities on the other are cordial, and while each is strong enough to maintain order within its own sphere. Should relations become strained, or should the Chinese authorities lose their power of control, it is manifest that the forces normally sufficient for the security of the Settlement become entirely inadequate. After the experiences of 1924-25 it was in fact estimated that to hold the Cordon line in order to keep out a rabble, and to retain at the same time sufficient reserves to deal with internal disorder, would need reinforcement by 4000 rifles; while to protect the Settlement against an organised attack by Chinese troops a force of at least 10,000 men would be required.

That was the view of the military advisers of the Municipal Council when the conditions in China in 1926 began to cause anxiety. The estimate was communicated, through the Consular Service, to the Governments concerned; but the Municipal Council had no authority to suggest how or from what sources

reinforcements on this scale could or should be provided. Clearly the time factor might be of vital importance, and the Council could neither indicate the length of warning that could be given, nor could it in any way control the time required to collect reinforcements. Here again the international character of the Settlement introduced many complications. Assistance on the scale suggested could not be provided, as on previous occasions, by the warships on the Station, under arrangements made by the men on the spot. International interests were threatened and clearly the formation of an international force was an affair for the Governments concerned.

The formation of such a force on indefinite data bristled with difficulties. What nations were willing to take part? in what proportions should they take part? and how far were nations so situated as to be able to provide contingents with sufficient promptitude? Who would undertake the co-ordination of an intelligence system commanding general confidence to provide reliable information on which the force could be brought into being and operate? The simplest plan would naturally have been to give one nation a mandate to be prepared to provide the required force. Japan was clearly indicated as the nation, but she was unwilling to undertake anything which might further embitter Chinese feeling towards her and result in a boycott of Japanese trade. Apart from this, Japan was still feeling sore as the result of interference by the Western nations with her attempts to establish a dominating position in North Eastern China; a feeling intensified by the sacrifice of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in the interests of Anglo-American relations.

The U.S.A. also was in a position to provide the

forward by the Municipal Council. It was, however, agreed in somewhat general and indefinite terms that should necessity arise Shanghai would be reinforced by an international force of 4000 rifles. To this force the British Government undertook to contribute one battalion and 500 naval ratings subject to the proviso that the other Powers interested produced their quotas simultaneously. The Government was determined neither to be drawn into isolated action which might lead to a small force, without adequate support, getting into difficulties, nor to offer opposition to any organised Chinese Army, as that might be interpreted as taking sides in a Chinese quarrel. No definite assurance could be obtained, however, from the other Powers either as to the strength of their detachments or the time it would take to produce them. In the event of a larger force than 4000 men being required it was hoped that Japan would be prepared to come forward, but the Japanese Government would give no assurance on that point.

Shanghai had watched the progress of the Cantonese Army with considerable anxiety. It was realised that not only might Sun's army be attacked by the Southerners but that the success of the latter was encouraging their sympathisers, especially Westernised Chinese, scattered throughout China to intrigue against foreign interests. There were signs too that the spread of communist doctrine and propaganda was already affecting the working classes of the Chinese population in the Settlement and its neighbourhood. The arrival of Chiang Kai-shek's army at Hankow in September 1926 indicated that the anticipated danger was approaching. Contact with Sun's advanced troops on the Yangtse had been made and

the success of the Southerners had been the signal for an intense boycott of foreigners, especially British and Japanese, in the Yangtse trading centres. The Peking Government also showed signs of developing anti-foreign leanings, to conciliate those attracted by the nationalist aims of the Cantonese. It was on these grounds that the Municipal Council approached the representatives of the Powers concerned, with the object of having a cut-and-dried scheme in readiness should it become necessary to reinforce the local contingent.

For the time being the Yangtse appeared to mark the limit of Chiang Kai-shek's northern movement, and conditions of stalemate occurred in the neighbourhood of Hankow. This, however, far from relieving the danger to Shanghai, led to its development. Chiang Kai-shek, checked in his northern progress, now turned eastward with the object of crushing Sun and securing control over the wealth and revenues of Shanghai. Whether Sun, with the assistance of his Northern allies, would be strong enough to resist this movement, could not be definitely forecast, but it became imperative that the reinforcement promised to Shanghai should be available at short notice.

The British Government, by the middle of December, had therefore to make up its mind whence the battalion required for the promised contingent should come. To take a battalion from India would have ensured early arrival, but this would have entailed extra expense; moreover, India could not have been kept short for an indefinite period, and replacement, with a consequent disturbance of the normal system of reliefs, would have been entailed. Consequently it was decided to send the Suffolk Regiment from

Gibraltar to Hong Kong, where it would be at short call. The regiment would not arrive for two months; but in the meantime the Indian battalion at Hong Kong, could move to Shanghai in case of urgent necessity. The Government adhered to its determination not to be drawn into isolated action and no British force was to appear at Shanghai till the contingents of other Powers were on the way. Moreover, it was determined that the role of the reinforcement was to guarantee the internal security of the Settlement area, and to prevent disorganised bands of Chinese soldiery from entering it. On no account was a side to be taken in Chinese disputes, and no resistance was to be offered to an organised Chinese Army. Under these arrangements, the Suffolks would arrive at Hong Kong on 3rd February 1927 and, as the Municipal Government had not definitely applied for assistance, nothing further at the moment could be done. The non-committal attitude of the other Powers also put the immediate reinforcement of Shanghai out of the question.

During December, moreover, the threat to Shanghai showed no signs of maturing rapidly. Chiang Kai-shek's operations against Sun's troops were limited to the advance of a comparatively weak detachment directed on Hangchow, a port on the coast about 100 miles south of Shanghai. No large movement by his main armies from the Hankow area appeared yet to be in preparation; and it was estimated that in any case it would take a month for a large army to reach Shanghai from that direction. At the time, Shanghai was perhaps chiefly alarmed at the prospect of Sun receiving assistance from the Shantung Army, whose evil reputation made them an unwelcome addition to

the local forces. This step was contemplated by the Northern group to strengthen its hold on the lower Yangtse and to check Chiang Kai-shek's movement eastward.

On the 5th January, however, an event occurred which changed the whole aspect of affairs, and not only greatly increased the alarm at Shanghai, but necessitated a rapid realignment of the home Government's policy.

On that date the British Concession at Hankow was overrun by a mob, of which Cantonese soldiery undoubtedly formed a considerable part. The small detachments landed from the cruiser lying at this river port were quite unable to exercise control, and it was with great difficulty, and with some casualties, that the British community was able to take refuge on ships.

The Cantonese authorities undertook to restore order and to protect the Concession; but it soon became apparent that this was only an excuse for its occupation. The whole episode had in fact been arranged deliberately—a new technique suggested perhaps to the nationalist leaders by their Russian advisers as a means of evicting British interests, and abolishing the position secured by what the Chinese termed the “unequal treaties”. It was a way to present a *fait accompli* without incurring responsibility for open violation of engagements.

The arrival of the fugitives from Hankow stirred Shanghai deeply; and it was felt that should a Cantonese army reach Shanghai, the same technique might be employed, but with much more serious consequences. The foreign interests centred there were

immensely greater than at Hankow; moreover, the numbers of the foreign community and its distribution, mingled as it was with a huge Chinese population over a large area, forbade the possibility of evacuation without heavy loss of life and enormous loss of property.

As regards Hankow little could be done. The *fait accompli* had to be accepted. It was left to our diplomatic representatives to find a solution which would safeguard our interests there as far as possible under the new conditions. The Chen-O'Malley agreement, arrived at after a few weeks' negotiation, confirmed the loss of the privileged position of the Concession, but secured certain guarantees of security and trading rights. To have insisted on the restoration of the Concession would have entailed the use of force on a scale which would have amounted to a state of war. The state of public opinion, both at home and elsewhere, was opposed to the use of force, and the results obtainable were not considered, in any case, to be worth the risks and costs.

From a purely military point of view the use of force on a limited scale at Hankow itself could not be justified, and transport by the long line of approach up the Yangtse was procurable for a small force only. Large war vessels could not use the river except during high water and at many points transport vessels would be at the mercy of artillery on the banks, as from the water there was no view of the surrounding country, and warships could give little protection to them by fire. Manifestly a force sent to Hankow might become isolated and lead to disastrous entanglements. The alternative course, of forcing restoration of our rights by reprisals on Canton itself

implied open war, and at the best would have had a disastrous effect on our commercial interests, as well as endangering the lives of foreigners scattered throughout the country. The fact that the revision of treaties which gave foreigners privileged status in China had already been agreed to in principle, and was merely in abeyance pending the establishment of a central government with whom negotiations could with confidence be carried on, was a further argument in favour of a diplomatic settlement of the Hankow affair. This, however, could of course not be accepted as a precedent for the unilateral cancellation of treaties, nor could a general agreement be reached by negotiation with a government which represented a part only of China. The more immediate serious problem that the Government had therefore to consider was how to prevent a repetition elsewhere, especially at Shanghai, of the procedure adopted at Hankow.

At first it was hoped that the Chinese action at Hankow implied such a threat to all foreign interests that international action on a larger scale than had previously been contemplated would be taken, for the protection of Shanghai, and to prove to the Chinese that unilateral cancellation of treaty rights could not be tolerated. Steps were initiated to prepare a contingent to take its place in any international force that might be organised, though it was hoped that the bulk of the force would be furnished by Japan and that Japan would provide a commander.

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interest arose. Japan, owing to her proximity, could afford to postpone action; moreover, she was apprehensive of the boycott being directed against her trade, whilst the U.S.A. Government was confident that at the worst she would be able to evacuate her own nationals in safety, as their numbers were not considerable. She relied too on the strong pro-American sympathies of the Chinese Nationalist Party to guarantee the safety of American missionaries and others who were in isolated positions. Thus, although this policy did not receive much support from American citizens in Shanghai, it was clear that no assistance on a large scale would be received from the U.S.A. in dealing with the situation.

It became increasingly evident that Britain would have to pull her own chestnuts out of the fire. As a first step, while international action was still looked on as a possibility, the Consul-General at Shanghai was authorised on the 12th January to call direct on Hong Kong for the battalion earmarked as the British contribution to the international force of 4000 men, agreed to in principle though still non-existent. Measures to provide further reinforcements from England were also taken.

On the same date, however, a telegram was received from Admiral Tyrwhitt, Commander-in-Chief on the China Station, strongly recommending the despatch of a division of troops from England; and this telegram probably had a determining effect on the Government's decision that stronger action was necessary.

But the decision was not an easy one to arrive at. It involved isolated instead of international action, and

the risk of a single-handed war on a scale difficult to limit. It involved also the despatch of a large force before a danger had actually matured. Much might happen before it could arrive in Chinese waters. If, on the one hand, there was a marked amelioration of the situation, the despatch of the force might easily be represented as an expensive and panic measure; even as a somewhat provocative one, if the force were landed on Chinese territory, or even in the International Settlement. To find room for it at Hong Kong or Singapore in a position of readiness would be very difficult, and the troops could not be kept for an indefinite period on board ship. On the other hand, hesitation and delay, waiting to see what would happen, would incur the danger of a disaster involving both lives and property. A force arriving too late would lose all its value as a protective element and could not retrieve the situation.

No doubt these and other considerations were fully weighed by the Government and their advisers in the fighting Services before the despatch of what became known as the Shanghai Defence Force was ordered on the 17th of January. The name indicated the object of the force, whose purely protective role was notified to the League of Nations and the interested Powers in due course.

The objects of the force may be defined as:

- (a) To secure the safety of the International Settlement at Shanghai, denying the entrance into it of any Chinese force, organised or disorganised; thus providing a place of refuge where the lives of British nationals would be safe.
- (b) To bring home to the Chinese that any further

attempts to wrest concessions by force would not be tolerated.

- (c) To protect British property so far as it could be done without aggressive action or without forming detachments which would involve further dangers.

It will be noted that the main departure from the policy which up till then had been adopted lay in the fact that resistance was to be offered to any Chinese force attempting to enter the International Settlement, and that it was no longer a matter of merely preventing the entrance of disorganised bands and maintaining order.

The strength of the force represented a Division, less a considerable amount of its artillery and other components required to give a Division a wide range of mobility and offensive power. Of the three infantry brigades in the divisional organisation, one was to be supplied from India and the other two were made up from troops in England and the Mediterranean Stations. Sufficient aircraft for reconnaissance purposes and a few armoured cars were added. The 1st Cruiser Squadron (which could provide a landing-party of 1000 rifles) and a battalion of Marines were also ordered to proceed to the China Station.

The constitution of the force was dictated by the nature of the country around Shanghai—flat, intersected by creeks and wide ditches, with observation limited by villages, trees and by complete absence of any high ground. All these characteristics indicated infantry, with its machine guns, as the arm on which dependence must be placed. The almost complete lack of roads beyond the Settlement area emphasised

the natural conditions. In addition to their own artillery, troops could count to some extent on receiving support from ships' guns, though the difficulties of observation and the fact that ships would be operating in a narrow channel, perhaps exposed to hostile artillery fire, diminished the amount of reliance which could be placed on such support.

The Defence Ministries and the Board of Trade acted promptly on the Government's decision given on 17th January. The Indian 20th Brigade embarked at Bombay on 27th January, and six battalions of 13th and 14th Brigades at Southampton on 28th-29th, while the s.s. *Megantic*, carrying Major-General Duncan who had been selected to command the force, sailed from England on 25th, and was to pick up two battalions at Malta to complete these brigades. Sailings ensured that the first transports from India would reach Shanghai by 15th February, and those from England by 24th February.

This was a very remarkable performance, especially when one considers the improvised nature of the force. It was not a case of touching a button which would put into operation a prearranged scheme of mobilisation. Certain items only of normal mobilisation plans could be applied. Numbers of special instructions had to be issued and conferences held to work out arrangements and special measures. The close touch which had been established between the War Office and the Board of Trade as a result of the war, and the organisation of the Committee of Imperial Defence, proved of immense value. There was no serious hitch in procuring and fitting out suitable ships, and the plans of the two departments developed

concurrently. The Indian Brigade, with units normally at war strength, presented fewer difficulties; but units at home had to be raised from their low peace strength to a special establishment by calling up certain categories of the Army Reserve in the regiments concerned. Units, which exist in peace on paper only, had also to be formed, and transport suitable to the special conditions for which the force was required had to be organised. The Commander and Staff of the force had to be specially appointed, and these would have no opportunity of seeing their troops until arrival.

Experience gained in the war no doubt contributed to the display of rapid and energetic action, but organisation must be sound and adaptable to produce such results. That there were omissions and mistakes in some of the arrangements was inevitable. Ships were not always stowed so that articles came out at the other end in the exact order they were required, nor were components always in the same ship. Very considerable difficulty was experienced in maintaining communication with General Duncan while on his voyage owing to various complications that arise in the transmission of cipher messages to a merchant ship. It is a difficulty not at all easy to get over, but one requiring attention in any similar circumstances.

To follow now what was happening in China while General Duncan's force was on its voyage.

We left Shanghai still protected by Sun's armies astride the Yangtse some 300 miles from its mouth, with their left thrown back on the coast covering Hangchow, where they were being attacked by a detachment of Chiang Kai-shek's armies. Danger to

Shanghai threatened from this direction, as Hangchow was only 100 miles distant, and little reliance could be placed on Sun's power of resistance. Defections from his force might at any time occur, and assistance which he might receive from his Shantung ally introduced a new risk to Shanghai if fighting took place in its immediate neighbourhood.

In Shanghai itself, communistic and nationalist intrigues were giving rise to internal unrest. A senior Chinese employee of a British tramway company was murdered on 12th January as an opening move in a projected tramway strike, and warning was received that a general strike might occur towards the end of the month about the time of the Chinese New Year. So long as Sun's armies held fast there would be no need to occupy the Cordon, but the threat of internal trouble indicated the necessity of reinforcing the police and volunteers. It was accepted that naval landing-parties could give all the assistance that was required, but the feeling grew that the best way to avoid trouble was to give an indication that measures to meet it were being taken.

With this object the British Consul-General was authorised to call for the Indian Battalion from Hong Kong. As on 22nd January news was received that Sun had suffered a severe reverse, while strikes were in progress and unrest was growing, the call was made. The battalion disembarked on 27th January, subsequently returning to its station when relieved by the Suffolks, who arrived on 7th February. About the same period the other Powers concerned took steps to hold reinforcements in readiness, though they landed no parties and showed no disposition to share the lead taken by Britain.



At the beginning of February, with General Duncan's leading troops now rapidly approaching, the situation still remained very obscure as to what should be done with them when they arrived. The Chinese have no superiors in the art of placing their opponents in a false position. With a knowledge of the approach of the force the Cantonese might quite possibly change their policy. If their attacks were not pressed and if Sun's armies held out, there would be no apparent reason for landing more troops at Shanghai. It might be represented as aggressive action unless danger to Shanghai were imminent. The international status of the Settlement added other complications. The force had been despatched on the initiative of the British Government, and not in response to a call from the Government of the Settlement. Suitable accommodation must be provided for the troops if they landed, as they were to provide a garrison, not to conduct a campaign. But how was accommodation to be found? It could not be expected that an international body would requisition property for an uninvited force, and there were no barracks and few public sites which, even if the Council were willing, could be placed at the disposal of the troops. To place the force outside the Settlement area would have given rise to acute controversy with the Chinese authorities, while the price of property in the Settlement area made purchase prohibitive, the value of land amounting in some cases to as much as £200,000 per acre.

In fact the difficulties which must always arise when a force is despatched from a distance before the situation is clear, and when its destination lies outside the Empire, became very apparent: difficulties which

must, however, be faced if the risk of troops arriving too late cannot be accepted.

In appreciating the condition of affairs, it must be realised that at this stage the Municipal Council had not yet definitely asked for reinforcements—merely that an international force of 4000 men should be held in readiness. Moreover, martial law had not been declared, without which no property could legally be requisitioned by the Council. Even the Punjabis from Hong Kong (and their relief the Suffolks) represented a purely British precaution, and were accommodated in privately owned British property; the Council was in no sense responsible for them. As a temporary measure it was possible to land part of General Duncan's force at Hong Kong, and even if necessary at Wei-hai-wei (still in British occupation); but the accommodation at either place was strictly limited and definite decision was postponed till the latest possible moment. Final decision as to the destination of the transports was eventually left to Admiral Tyrwhitt, the man on the spot responsible for the safety of British life and property. A further attack on Sun's army was anticipated, which if successful might be followed by a rapid advance on Shanghai, necessitating immediate action.

Subject to the Admiral's decision, transports were to stop at Hong Kong. Troops could not, however, be kept on board the transports there, as ventilation was inadequate in the ships when at anchor; and if part were sent on to Wei-hai-wei, the difficulties had to be considered which would arise in administering and supplying the force if its constituent elements got broken up and scattered.

On 7th February the transports with the leading

troops of the 20th Indian Brigade arrived at Hong Kong, and on the 9th the Admiral decided that they should continue their voyage to Shanghai, as he could not risk delays which would be involved by disembarkation and re-embarkation. The two leading battalions consequently disembarked at Shanghai on the 14th February. The Central Government at Peking protested but were reassured as to the purely protective nature of the force. Chinese governments had often accepted without protest the landing of naval parties on Chinese territory for the protection of foreign interests; but the landing of soldiers was to them associated with punitive action.

On the 16th February Sun was again defeated, and as this appeared to make a crisis imminent, Admiral Tyrwhitt decided that the leading brigade from England should also be brought straight to Shanghai, though this involved placing troops on British or municipal-owned property outside the actual Settlement area. Eventually, however, owing to wet weather and the difficulty of providing shelter for troops, only General Duncan's Headquarters and two battalions acted on this decision, the remainder stopping at Hong Kong.

On the 23rd February it was known that Sun's army was in full retreat. Straggling parties soon began to dribble into Shanghai, and at the same time a general strike was in progress in which 100,000 Chinese were taking part. On the 25th it was deemed advisable for the 20th Indian Brigade to occupy a Cordon line as a purely British undertaking.

A further danger now arose as the assistance promised to Sun by Shantung troops materialised. Up to this time these troops had been kept in the neighbour-

hood of Nanking, but now they began to arrive at the north railway station on the outskirts of the International Settlement. About this time, too, a Chinese gunboat which had gone over to the Nationalists added to the general alarm by opening fire: probably a gesture to show its sympathies, as no harm was done, and what target it was shooting at, was not discovered.

General Duncan on arrival established his Headquarters ashore, having now seven battalions at his immediate disposal. He found the situation for the moment quiet, but in any case he had now sufficient force to occupy the Cordon line and to render Shanghai secure, though it will be realised it had arrived only in the nick of time. The main problem which first confronted him was to find accommodation for his men. Fortunately members of the British community had shown great foresight and energy in starting preparations. Shelters were in course of erection on the few open spaces available, though the muddy nature of the ground at the time, due to rain, not only caused discomfort but hindered progress of work, especially when troops perforce had to occupy half-finished erections. The Administrative Staff had many difficulties to contend with, not only in this direction but also in hiring existing buildings. Negotiations for Chinese property were especially difficult, partly due to Chinese dilatory methods and partly owing to the extraordinary difficulty of tracing the real owners. In many cases properties belonged to syndicates the members of which were scattered over China with no accredited local representative. Here again the assistance of individuals of the British community with experience of Chinese methods and local knowledge proved invaluable. Apart from the primary

question of accommodation, there was an almost total absence of recreational and training space, essential if prolonged occupation were involved. For such reasons it became very apparent that no place could be worse suited than Shanghai to receive a large influx of troops, and this fact soon made consideration of at least reducing the size of the force a pertinent question. But that it could not be immediately done was proved by events.

Chiang Kai-shek, though he had driven back the remnants of Sun's armies to within fifteen miles of Shanghai, now found his further progress blocked in that direction, partly due to the arrival of Shantung troops, but also to the presence of British troops which would deny him his real objective. He therefore sought a new way of exploiting his success. Leaving his right wing facing the Shantung detachment in front of Shanghai, he initiated a fresh movement against the rest of the Shantung army at Nanking, combining an advance down the Yangtse from Hankow with a northerly advance of his central army. In the face of this threat the Shantung army attempted to concentrate again at Nanking, and a hurried withdrawal of the Shanghai detachment took place, leaving no Chinese force to cover Shanghai, as Sun's army had practically ceased to exist. These events took place during the first three weeks of March, and by the 22nd of that month Cantonese troops were on the outskirts of Shanghai.

The peak of the crisis had now arrived and it remained to be seen what the further action of the Nationalists would be. Meanwhile, the nearer they approached, the more disturbed conditions became in Shanghai. In the Settlement area the presence of

foreign troops kept things quiet, and there was little disorder beyond some street demonstrations which could without much difficulty be controlled. In the Chinese city, however, and especially in the Chapei-Paoshan area, strikes were frequent, murders were committed and police stations were seized by Nationalist adherents.

With no established Chinese authority in a position to control the Chinese population of Greater Shanghai, the Municipal Council at last considered it time to declare a state of emergency, mobilise the volunteers and to apply for the 4000-men scheme to be put into operation. Whether this decision would have been so long delayed but for the assurance of security given by British troops is a matter for speculation. In any case, security now ceased to be a purely British concern and became an international responsibility.

The Suffolk Regiment in consequence, as was originally intended, now came under the control of the O.C. Volunteer force, who was responsible for internal security; and representatives of other nationalities began to take over certain sections of the Cordon line which previously had been held entirely by British troops. The American contingent still, however, remained on board ship in reserve available to protect the lives and property of its own nationals. General Duncan's force remained distinct and independent of the international body, though ready to co-operate with it and also to assist in the protection of the French Concession. The French had increased their garrison and remained responsible for the holding of their own perimeter, but a working agreement ensured that British troops should furnish a reserve for the French Concession in which many British resided.

The military picture now presented shows the Cordon line, in essence an outpost position with entrenched and wired posts, denying access to the Settlement and to certain areas outside it where foreign interests were established. This line was held in the main by British troops, except on the front of the French Concession and in a small section in the Hongkew neighbourhood where from 24th March the Japanese contingent of the international force had taken over a sector of the line. Within the Cordon line the Shanghai Volunteers, reinforced by the remainder of the international force, were responsible for internal security. Reserves available to repel any determined attack on the Cordon line or other emergency were in the main furnished by General Duncan's force.

During the retreat of the Chinese Northern forces, the troops on the Cordon line were occasionally fired on by snipers and had to prevent armed parties entering the Settlement. Though some casualties occurred on both sides, no serious fighting took place. Some 2000 Northerners, however, had to be disarmed before being allowed to take refuge in the Settlement.

A difficult matter to deal with was the withdrawal into safety of isolated Europeans in charge of missionary, hospital and similar establishments situated in the thickly populated Chinese territory outside the Cordon line. The rescue of one such party nearly cost General Duncan his chief Staff officer.

The crisis was not to pass as easily as the presence of an adequate force at Shanghai appeared to guarantee. Chiang Kai-shek's movement on Nanking developed successfully and the Shantung army, in

danger of being surrounded, withdrew northwards, abandoning that city in an orderly manner.

The Nationalists, on the other hand, on entering Nanking on the 24th March attacked the British, American and Japanese Consulates and committed outrages on men and women of the foreign community. The foreign population were forced to seek refuge outside the city and had eventually to be evacuated under cover of the fire of British and American war vessels, not without casualties and with great loss of property. As a precaution against further outrages of the same nature, a general evacuation of foreigners at all points on the upper Yangtse in the hands of the Nationalists followed, causing an increased influx of refugees into Shanghai. Chiang Kai-shek does not appear to have been responsible for the outrage at Nanking which was engineered by extremists of his party, but naturally reparation was demanded from the Nationalist Government, and as no satisfactory compliance was obtained, relations became very strained.

Chiang Kai-shek, however, now for the first time joined his troops at Shanghai and his appearance was marked by an improvement in the situation there. It became apparent that he represented the moderate element of his party, but that he had no control over the extremists who were plotting against him.

Subsequent events belong to another chapter in the history of China's foreign relations. The Shanghai defence force was to play a part in those events and it was long before its strength could be materially reduced; a small British garrison has in fact remained at Shanghai since that period. But the original task had now been successfully accomplished and Shanghai



had been made secure. It had also been proved to the Chinese that there were limits beyond which concessions could not be regained from foreigners by force. For a time, it is true that after the Nanking episode affairs in China were in a very critical position; but the scene shifted, and so far as Shanghai was concerned the crisis had passed.

A very brief outline of subsequent events is sufficient to indicate why the local position improved, although as is generally the case in Chinese affairs, the episode was not terminated by a clear-cut, satisfactory settlement.

Chiang Kai-shek and the moderate section of his party having established themselves on the lower Yangtse, the future of Shanghai depended on how far they could maintain their position. In April, plots of the extremists against Chiang matured, and he was deposed from command; splitting the Nationalist Party just when it looked like carrying all before it. The Northern allies, whose position had been weakened by the spread of Nationalist sympathies among their own following, took advantage of the split to regain temporarily much of their lost territory. Chiang Kai-shek, however, soon succeeded in getting the better of the extremists in his own party, and the expulsion from China of the Russian Mission, which exercised a dominating influence in the extremist section, resulted. Chiang's success transferred the centre of gravity of the Nationalists from Hankow to Nanking, and the Nanking Government was formed in which Chiang, with fluctuating fortune, has since played a chief part. In consequence Shanghai was able to maintain relations with a single Chinese party and has not again been directly affected by the varying

fortunes in Chinese civil wars. The Defence Force had to be maintained at strength until the internal state of China had improved, and it was called on from time to time to furnish detachments to protect interests elsewhere in China; but so far as circumstances permitted, the employment of British troops for this purpose was strictly limited, and their gradual reduction was initiated as soon as it was clear that they no longer required to be maintained at the strength dictated by their original object.

As an object lesson the despatch of the Shanghai Defence Force has suffered from the success it achieved. Some have said that it was a panic measure; others that a much smaller display of force would have sufficed. Against such contentions one is compelled to argue on what might have happened rather than what actually did happen; and it may be difficult to convince those who refuse to exercise their imagination that the chief fact in connection with the episode was the arrival of the Force in time and in sufficiently impressive numbers to achieve its purpose. How often in the history of the Empire has the opposite occurred, and serious wars developed because action was too long delayed, or because an inadequate force was sent to deal with a threatening situation in the first instance? The difficulty which the Government must have had in reaching a decision so long before the danger which threatened Shanghai actually materialised has already been discussed. One can hardly doubt that the Cabinet relied greatly on the advice of the chiefs of the Staff's sub-Committee, which the machinery of the Committee of Imperial Defence now automatically makes available. Prompt executive

action which followed the decision was also largely due to the close touch established by the Committee of Imperial Defence between the Board of Trade and other Ministries with the fighting Services. There may still be room for improvement in our organisation for the higher direction and conduct of defence operations, but a great advance has been made since vacillations and delays of all sorts led to the failure of the attempt to extricate Gordon from Khartum.

The purpose of the Force was clearly defined and expressed in its name. It had no roving commission to protect our interests throughout China, though no doubt it was hoped that a firm stand at Shanghai would have favourable reactions at less important centres. Concentration of effort and strict adherence to the object were the guiding principles, and till the security of Shanghai was firmly established, no considerable part of the Force was diverted to other purposes, although the temptation to form detachments elsewhere was not wanting when such questions as the re-establishment of the position at Hankow or reparations for the Nanking outrage were raised. But the advance to Baghdad and other events of the Great War had shown how easy it is to be drawn into commitments of incalculable dimensions when new objects are added to a limited undertaking.

That some confusion arose, in the minds of the local community, as to the purpose of the Force and the extent to which it could be used for the protection of private property, is easy to understand. Its object, the defence of Shanghai, meant primarily the assertion of Treaty rights against a policy threatening their unilateral denunciation. It was also a measure to ensure the existence of a place of refuge where the

lives of British subjects would be safe. The latter purpose carried with it the maintenance of law and order within the Settlement area and the protection of public property on which the existence of the community depended. The protection of private property stood on a different footing. Within the Settlement the Army could, without hesitation, be employed to support the local authority for its protection, so far as troops could be spared for the purpose; but outside the Settlement areas no such claim to military protection existed. The establishment of the Cordon line to include a residential area lying outside the limits of the Treaty Concession was essentially a precaution to ensure the safety of the lives of those for whom reasonable accommodation within the Settlement could not have been found. It was in many ways a military necessity and in the interests of the community as a whole, including its Chinese component. To have attempted the protection of private property outside the Cordon line would have led to dangerous dispersion of troops, and would have been consistent neither with the military nor political purpose for which the Force had been despatched.

Although the circumstances which led some years afterwards to a conflict at Shanghai between Japanese and Chinese troops had little in common with those which led to the despatch of the Shanghai Defence Force, and involved political issues which do not concern us here, there are some striking contrasts in the military conduct of the two incidents. In consequence of the murder of some Japanese and the state of acute hostility between the two races, Japan landed a force, mainly seamen and marines, in the Settlement with a view apparently to establishing guards in Chapei for

the protection of a large Japanese community in that suburb. Although Chapei lay outside the Settlement area and was occupied by some Chinese troops, no serious opposition seems to have been expected. But the force landed was neither large enough to overawe resistance nor strong enough to overcome it, and in the fighting that occurred, its advance was checked. Success encouraged the Chinese to bring up more troops, and heavy reinforcements were required from Japan to conduct operations on a much larger scale than was originally contemplated. Those who consider that the British Force sent to Shanghai was unnecessarily large should note the consequences of employing one that is inadequate. The proximity of Japan made prompt reinforcement comparatively easy, but a similar under-estimate on the part of the British Government would obviously have had immensely more serious consequences. Not only had Japan under-estimated the size of the force originally required but she had added to the difficulty of its task by introducing a second object. The original landing was preceded by, and connected with, a demand for reparations, conveyed in an ultimatum calculated to obscure the defensive object and to provoke Chinese resistance. Moreover, the Chinese Division which first opposed the Japanese did not in fact own allegiance to Nanking but was a detachment of a Canton army in opposition to it; and it was the terms of the ultimatum, coupled with the offensive action of Japan when her weak force was checked, which involved the Nanking Government in what might have been treated as a local clash. Those who consider that the Shanghai Defence Force might have been employed to secure reparation for the Hankow and Nanking

outrages should consider how easily it might have been drawn into undertakings beyond its capacity if such additions had been made to its primary task.

We may well rest content with the fact that the Force achieved its object and that it improved rather than embittered our relations with the Chinese. Nor did it give rise to misunderstandings and friction with other foreign Governments, or with their Nationals at Shanghai. The latter were more than a little inclined to contrast British action favourably with the comparative inaction of their own Governments, which left our predominant position at Shanghai more firmly established than ever. The troops themselves contributed largely to these results both by the good temper and patience they showed in handling the Chinese, and the manner in which they accepted circumstances of great discomfort that could not be altogether alleviated, in spite of the active and generous assistance of residents in Shanghai.

There is little to be said as regards the actual employment of the troops. Their main duty was to hold an outpost line and regulate civilian traffic through it. Hostile action in the form of occasional sniping was encountered, and a few attempts by armed parties to pass the Cordon also occurred, but were stopped without difficulty. Conditions demanded that counter action should be reduced to a minimum and clear orders were given to that effect. Good sense, patience and discipline were the qualities chiefly required. The predominating infantry character of the Force was fully justified by events. Armoured cars proved useful especially in patrolling, where roads existed, between the posts on the Cordon line. There were no tanks with the Force and in the actual course

of events they were not necessary, nor would they have proved a substitute for infantry. If, however, events had taken a more serious turn they would obviously have added greatly to the capacity of the Force to deal with an emergency. Infantry must always remain the most suitable arm for dealing with riots and for employment in street fighting, but that is no reason why they should be denied the assistance which armoured fighting vehicles can give them; and it seems unlikely that in the future any similar force would be despatched without a tank component, though in this case there were doubtless good reasons for its omission.

The Shanghai episode provides a valuable illustration of the functions of the Home Army as a central reserve and as a diplomatic agent. We cannot afford to treat it merely as a training establishment, and neither its armament nor its organisation for rapid mobilisation can safely be neglected, however much the possibility of its employment in Europe may have sunk into the background.

The danger of reducing our garrisons at isolated foreign stations to such a bare minimum that they cease to be of value as a local reserve of force was shown too by the very limited part the weak garrison of Hong Kong was able to play. If the crisis had developed more rapidly this might have led to serious results.

## CHAPTER IX

### PALESTINE, 1929

It would be difficult to imagine conditions more likely to bring about communal disorders than those which the attempt to re-establish a national home for the Jews in Palestine provided.

Economic conditions, distrust of Government impartiality, racial prejudice, and above all, religious fanaticism, combined to turn the contempt for the Jews which the Arabs had previously felt, into active hatred and jealousy. The Jews, on the other hand, were equally fanatical and not a little disposed to presume on their newly acquired status. On the top of all this the historical associations of the country provided a coincidence of spots holy to the two communities, and the calendar provided a coincidence of holy days.

Under Turkish rule the problem of the custody of a region round which the history of so many forms of religion centred had been treated in a broad-minded spirit. The small Jewish community and Jewish pilgrims had well-defined if limited privileges. Naturally, however, the ownership of places sacred to Moslems was vested in their own religious body, and when the Mandatory Power assumed control, it undertook to maintain the *status quo* in spite of the Jewish influx. It is not surprising that the Arabs watched the fulfilment of this promise jealously, nor that the Jews should seek by degrees to assert rights not included in their former privileges.



Our long experience of communal troubles in India and elsewhere should have taught us that communal rioting will break out with little warning, and to what length it will go. We know that the firm and impartial intervention of force is the sole means of restoring peace and of preventing the spread of disorder.

When we first assumed the mandate the danger was recognised and a very efficient British police force 750 strong was originally provided. It is amazing, however, what risks will be accepted under the urge of economy, and the desire to accelerate the evolution of self-government. The original police force brought about its own dissolution by the very effectiveness with which it had maintained order. A locally recruited force with the British element reduced to 150 officers and N.C.O.'s was substituted. Such a force, while quite satisfactory to deal with the suppression of ordinary crime, was bound to be a source of weakness in case of communal disturbances, since its reliability and impartiality would be suspected both by the Government and the communities involved, even if it had the required numerical strength. Had a backing of troops been available these objections to the change in the character of the police would not have mattered so much, but all ground troops were withdrawn from the country and responsibility for security transferred to the Air Ministry.

Here again all might have been well if the Air Ministry had been provided, as was the case in Iraq, with sufficient ground troops to deal with situations which could not be met by air action alone. The Royal Air Force, with armoured cars to co-operate, furnished an effective and economical force to guarantee the country from outside aggression, but air action could

not render assistance to the civil power in the task of maintaining internal order, and armoured cars also had their limitations. Moreover, in the event of an Arab outbreak within the frontiers it would be more than ever necessary to hold forces in readiness to keep a watch on the Bedouin Arabs outside.

One must conclude that the achievements of the Royal Air Force in Iraq had not been thoroughly analysed, and that the Government in its desire for economy had formed an over optimistic estimate of the potentialities of the new arm without fully considering the difference in the security problems of the two countries.

As a result of these conditions not only was there a quite exceptional danger of communal trouble but the local civil government had been left in an exceptionally weak position to deal with any considerable outbreak which might occur. A brief account may be given of the actual circumstances in which growing racial animosity, jealousy and fanaticism combined, with the coincidence of sacred dates and places, to bring matters to a head.

August 14th and 15th were the days on which the Jews commemorated the destruction of the Temple (the 'Tisha Be' Av), and on these days in particular they came to its remaining fragment, the Wailing Wall, to pray. But the Wailing Wall formed part of the main Moslem religious property and the Jewish right of assembly there was a privilege subject to very strict limitations. Equally significant to the Arabs were 16th and 17th August, as on those days (that is to say, from noon till noon) the birthday of the Prophet was celebrated and Moslem religious ceremonies took place in the same neighbourhood. Furthermore, in

1929, August 16th was a Friday, the principal prayer-day of the Arabs, while Saturday 17th was a Jewish Sabbath. This meant that on the 16th Moslem ceremonies began earlier in the day than usual and that on the 17th a number of Jews would come to the Wall.

The coincidence of dates would have been dangerous enough at any time, but the danger was greatly intensified by recent events which had inflamed the fanaticism of both parties. The Wall faced a paved *cul-de-sac* which enabled Jewish religious ceremonies to be carried on with a decent privacy. The Moslems, however, accused the Jews of taking advantage of the new regime to evade restrictions previously imposed. Consequently they as owners of the property had commenced certain alterations to the buildings adjoining the Wall which had the intended effect of allowing the Jewish meetings to be watched, and converted the *cul-de-sac* into a potential thoroughfare. The Jews protested loudly against this interference with their privacy and the Government intervened to induce the Moslems to modify their plans, with the result that some modifications were made which, while meeting the letter of the arrangement with Government, avoided its spirit. Neither party was satisfied and feeling ran high.

As a consequence of the dispute it was thought that the Jews intended on the occasion of the 'Tisha Be' Av to make an illegal demonstration of protest at the Wailing Wall. Young men from the country were urged to attend, and there was talk of their willingness to incur martyrdom. Which party was the more provocative in these matters is immaterial, the question which interests us is what the Government should have done about it.

The Government, as we have seen, was in a very weak position to maintain order by force, the police force, short of British personnel, was of doubtful reliability, while behind it was no arm which could be employed to assist the civil power. It is probable that a man with Lord Plumer's great prestige, force of character, tact and willingness to accept responsibility would, by sheer personality, have saved the situation and imposed his will on both parties. But Mr. Luke, who was in charge in the absence on leave of Sir John Chancellor, Lord Plumer's successor, could not be expected to exercise the same personal influence and was in a most difficult position. His task was made more difficult by the attitude of the local press, which did its utmost to embitter feeling.

Mr. Luke did what he could to mitigate the danger of the situation, which he fully realised, by calling on the responsible leaders on both sides to exercise their authority and by reviewing the police arrangements. He also called two District Commissioners who spoke Hebrew to Jerusalem to assist in maintaining order.

On the 14th these precautions sufficed, and though large numbers of Jews assembled and took part in the ceremonies, the police were able to maintain order and to keep the crowds on the move, both at the Wailing Wall and also when, as was customary, a procession of Jewish youths made the tour of the city walls.

On the 15th, however, Mr. Luke was presented with a more acute problem. The morning had been uneventful, but at 11.30 he was informed that a number of Jews had assembled at a school building with a view to organising a political demonstration at the Government offices and at the Wailing Wall.

A small detachment of police were sent to the

school to interview the leaders and to explain what would and what would not be permitted. Instructions were given to the effect that there must be no demonstration at either place, no flags carried, no songs sung, and that the men were not to move in any military formation. Permission was, however, given for a deputation of three to come to interview the chief secretary in the afternoon.

In view of the fact that the hotheads appeared determined to invite a clash with the police there appeared little prospect of the instructions being obeyed, and the problem now took a more definite shape. Should or should not access to the Wall be forbidden?

There were three alternatives:

- (a) To refuse permission.
- (b) To grant permission with or without conditions.
- (c) To let events take their course without either definitely granting or refusing permission.

The most cogent reason for not adopting the first course was that in the event of a clash with the police trouble might spread beyond the power of that inadequate force to maintain control. There was also unwillingness to interfere with attendance at legitimate ceremonies.

The second course was not followed as it would probably have been interpreted as a precedent for demonstrations on future occasions.

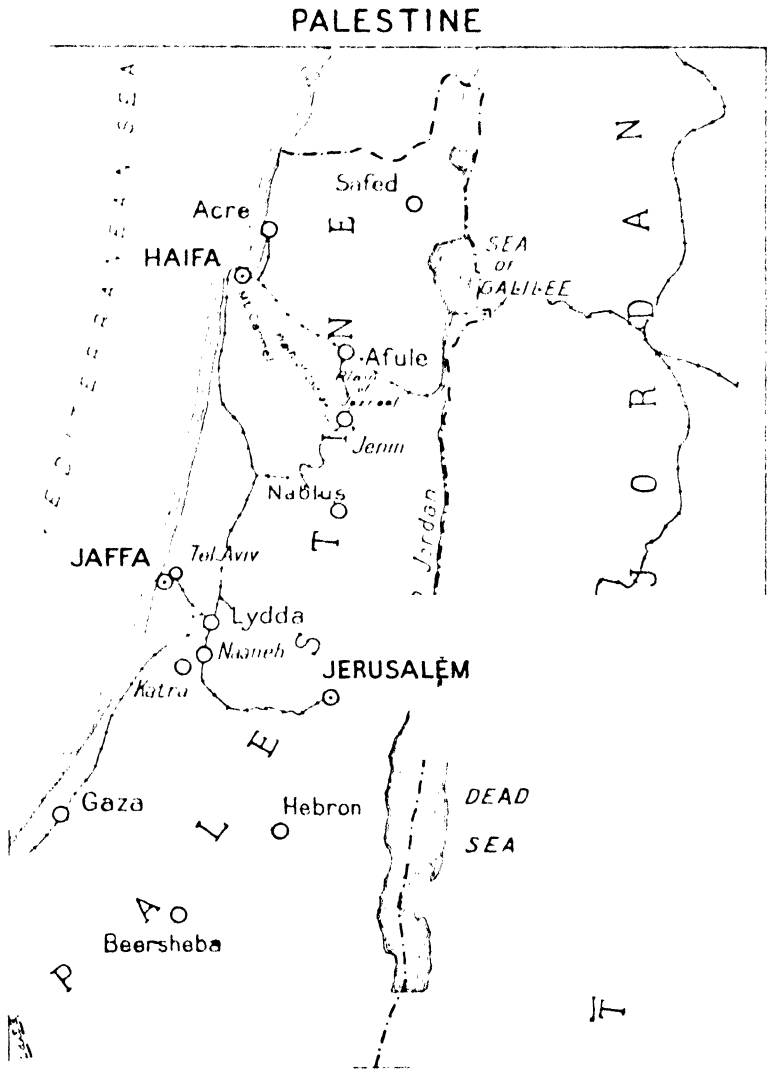
The third course was actually adopted.

At 1.30 P.M. the crowd, tired of waiting for a definite Government pronouncement, moved off to the Wall, orderly enough and escorted by a small body of police. A flag was carried but it was furled.

At the Wall the flag was raised, songs were sung, a speech made, and there were shouts designed to irritate Moslem sentiment and to assert Jewish claims to ownership. In spite of the defiance of instructions the police, to avoid interference with religious rights, did not intervene and the demonstration took place as intended, without actual disorder.

The orderliness of the demonstration, however, tended only further to inflame Moslem feelings, as it was attributed to the acquiescence of the Government in Jewish illegalities. An appeal which had been made to the Moslem leaders to avoid interference with the Jews during the ceremonies increased the feeling that they were being hoodwinked. Protests were lodged, a Moslem counter demonstration was organised, and on the 16th it took place, also at the Wall.

The Jewish demonstration had been carried out by some two or three hundred men, but the Moslem procession numbered over 2000, and to prohibit it seemed even less possible, in view of the police force available, than in the former case. On the whole the Moslem demonstration was orderly, but a certain amount of damage was done by the riff-raff to votive offerings and other objects sacred to the Jews. Two or three Jews who were at the Wall had to seek refuge, but there was no violent collision. The 17th also passed without serious violence, but feeling was becoming increasingly inflamed on both sides, while the efforts of the deputy High Commissioner to reconcile the parties served to irritate rather than to pacify the people. At Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa and Hebron the situation became threatening and the press was very provocative, magnifying and distorting



every incident. In the absence of any force it could rely on, the Government was thoroughly alarmed. The Armoured Car Company stationed in the Trans-Jordan at Amman was moved to Ramleh, twenty-five miles west of Jerusalem. But without the assistance of other troops armoured cars have definite limitations. Their crews cannot effect arrests, and except in situations where fire power and extreme mobility are required they are ineffective, lacking the adaptability of infantry to meet every turn of events.

The week following the demonstrations was marked by angry discussions and mutual recrimination. Government's well-meant efforts to keep the peace were interpreted as weakness and partiality. The police, who had really behaved extremely well, also came in for abuse. All over the country temper continued to rise, and at the end of the week violent rioting broke out round Jerusalem. Jewish colonies were attacked, murders were committed, houses were burnt and property was looted. Evidently all control had finally been lost; the S.O.S. was signalled and detachments of all three fighting Services were rushed to the rescue.

From Malta the Royal Navy sent the cruiser *Sussex*, at twenty-seven knots, to Jaffa, and the battleship *Barham*, at seventeen knots, to Haifa, while the aircraft carrier *Courageous*, with her attendant destroyers *Wanderer* and *Veteran*, stood by ready to transport an infantry battalion.

Egypt contributed two infantry battalions, one section Field Company Royal Engineers and an armoured car squadron of 12th Lancers (the regiment was then in process of conversion into an armoured car unit, but cars for one squadron only had yet been



received and the men were practically untrained in their new duties).

How to bring the Egyptian contingent to the scene of danger and distribute it with the least delay possible in order to protect the scattered Jewish settlements from the threatened pogrom was the initial problem. The timing of the movements is therefore worth examination. Brigadier W. Dobbie commanding the Cairo Brigade received a warning order for the despatch of one infantry battalion at 10 A.M. on the 24th and the 1st South Wales Borderers stationed at the citadel was selected. At 11.33 a further order stated that two platoons were to be despatched immediately by air to Jerusalem. Let us follow the doings of these two platoons first.

Their strength was fixed at two officers and fifty other ranks with three Lewis guns, and lorries for them arrived at the citadel at 12 noon. At 1 P.M. they were at the Heliopolis Aerodrome and at 1.15 they were in the air in four Victoria troop carriers. Flying was bumpy and the hurried dinner eaten before starting had little permanent value. One of the Victorias had a forced landing with engine trouble just before crossing the Suez Canal, but the other three reached Jerusalem safely, landing at the aerodrome nine kilometres from the city at 5.10 P.M. Here lorries met the men and, after another hasty meal in Jerusalem, at 7.30 they started off with police guards to take over the protection of a group of Jewish colonies which the Arabs were attacking and looting.

On arrival they found a good deal of promiscuous sniping going on, and during the night one of the villages was attacked twice by Arabs intent on loot,

but a few bursts of Lewis gun fire repelled the attack, inflicting casualties. Other villages were subjected to rifle fire from neighbouring orchards, and at dawn a strong patrol was sent out to deal with the snipers. Active patrolling during the night also dispersed parties of looters, and after the first night the situation was in hand and no further looting occurred. Altogether these platoons had experienced an active twenty-four hours subsequent to the sudden warning in Cairo on the 24th, and they continued to form the main guarantee of the Jewish colonies round Jerusalem till relieved on the 27th. The machine whose flight had been interrupted reached Jerusalem some three hours after the others and its party was held in reserve at police headquarters, taking part in a number of armoured car patrols.

The immense value of air transport will be better appreciated if it is realised that when the platoons arrived the small force of police in Jerusalem was in a state of exhaustion from continuous duty, and that in the Jewish colonies there were groups of defenceless inhabitants sheltering in such houses as gave a measure of protection—sometimes as many as a hundred in a building. A handful of troops arriving in time saved the situation and were more valuable than thousands a day late.

The rest of the Egyptian contingent had to move by train. The South Wales Borderers (less one rifle company and three machine gun platoons left at the citadel) entrained at Cairo after noon on the 24th, and at Kantara one company of the Green Howards and one section Royal Engineers from Ismailia joined a second train which carried the South Wales Borderers' transport. The trains were ferried across the canal at

Kantara and the leading train reached Ludd (Lydda) at 12.15 P.M. on the 25th.

Here Brigadier Dobbie, who accompanied the troops, was confronted with the first of many decisions he had to make as regards the distribution of his force. At Jerusalem the situation was fully developed and very serious; clearly the bulk of his contingent must go there in the first instance. At Jaffa and Haifa, however, it was known that there was acute tension and a conflict might break out at any moment. Jaffa was especially a danger point owing to the existence of the new Jewish town of Tel Aviv adjoining it.

The Brigadier therefore decided to drop C Company South Wales Borderers, less the detachment of fifty men already at Jerusalem which it had supplied, and from Ludd the Company was conveyed by train to Tel Aviv, arriving at 1.30 P.M. Thence it marched straight into Jaffa, to find at 2 P.M. the main square filled with a mob on whom the police and an armoured car had already had to fire.

After the crowd had been warned to disperse, an advance by the Company, with bayonets on guard, cleared the square in one minute; a Moslem pricked by a bayonet, as he did not move fast enough, was the sole casualty. Then having made touch with the District Commissioner, Lieut.-Colonel Petre, who was in command, started to relieve posts which had been established by Royal Air Force personnel and police as a screen between Tel Aviv and Jaffa, and this was completed by 6 P.M. Meantime, at about 5 P.M., reports of rioting and murder on the outskirts of Tel Aviv was received and a party of about twenty men was moved by bus to the scene, where shooting by both Jews and Arabs was going on. Debussed, the

men advanced and cleared the Arabs with some casualties out of the orange groves and houses from which they had been firing, while the police forced the Jews back into Tel Aviv. An armoured car co-operating with the soldiers pursued the Arabs, who, however, found refuge in orange groves. A few caught hiding were handed over to the police and there was no subsequent trouble in this locality. How many casualties among the rioters on either side occurred during the day is uncertain, but the night passed quietly, curfew, enforced by armoured car and infantry patrols, having been established at 6.30. Raids by troops and police in the small hours of the night resulted in the capture of some arms in Jewish houses.

So far as the two towns were concerned order was now fairly well re-established, but in the exposed village colonies no protection could yet be given, pending the arrival of H.M.S. *Sussex*.

Leaving Jaffa for the moment, let us follow Brigadier Dobbie and the remainder of the South Wales Borderers to Jerusalem, which they reached at 4.30 P.M. on the 25th. There the police were found in a state of exhaustion and immediate steps to relieve them were required. As the South Wales Borderers Battalion was, on account of detachments at Cairo and Jaffa, reduced to one rifle company and one machine gun platoon, the Headquarters wing was organised into a rifle platoon, and when the second train arrived at 8.15 the section of Royal Engineers were also used as infantry. The company of the Green Howards which was on this second train could not be employed as it was required for another purpose almost as soon as it detrained. The situation in Jerusalem, though steadied by the arrival of the first troops by air, was

still very acute, and outlying Jewish settlements were in danger and every available man of the South Wales Borderers was needed for active duty.

Reports received at 10 P.M. described the situation at Haifa also to be very critical, and the only troops on whom Brigadier Dobbie could lay his hands to send to this new scene of trouble was the company of Green Howards which had just detrained. Back it had to go to the station, and by 1.30 A.M. on the 26th it was on its way to Haifa, where it arrived at 7 A.M. There it was met by the District Commissioner, who reported large parties of Arabs armed with sticks collecting in various parts of the town. An excited crowd outside the station, which the police could not control, indicated the state of affairs.

Leaving one platoon at the station, the company at once marched off to clear the town, dropping pickets at cross-roads and sending patrols to danger points as the crowds were dispersed. By 9.30 A.M. control was restored, except in one area which was not finally clear till 1 P.M. At 10.45 a platoon was despatched to Acre where trouble threatened, but as it did not mature the platoon was at once recalled. A little later another platoon was despatched by rail to the point of Mount Carmel in consequence of an air report that a party of Arabs was advancing from that direction. This proved to be a working party of convicts who had escaped from control, but with the assistance of mounted police they were rounded up as they scattered and tried to hide in the scrub, the whole party, about fifty strong, being captured. During the day various patrols in motor transport moved to threatened spots and at 6 P.M. curfew was established and enforced by motor patrols. A quiet night resulted, but further outbreaks

occurred next morning in which Arabs and Jews were murdered and houses burnt. The troops came in for some sniping while they were actively employed intervening in the riots and in moving parties of Jewish men, women and children to places of safety. Nevertheless the situation was now safe, as reinforcements had arrived. H.M.S. *Barham* anchored off the port at 7 A.M. and by 11 A.M. a strong naval landing-party had relieved the troops.

Let us pause here to review the general situation. The vanguard of the rescue force in the shape of two platoons flown from Egypt had checked the enemy on the night of the 24th. On the 25th and 26th Brigadier Dobbie's main guard, consisting of the South Wales Borderers and one company of the Green Howards, had occupied Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa, the tactical key points essential to secure pending the arrival of the main body. The main body was closing up in three columns represented by H.M.S. *Sussex*, arriving at Jaffa on the morning of the 26th; H.M.S. *Barham*, due at Haifa on the morning of the 27th; and the third from Egypt, consisting of the rest of the Green Howards and a company of the King's Regiment, due at Jerusalem on the evening of the 26th, followed by the Armoured Car Squadron of 12th Lancers a day later. A further reserve would be available when H.M.S. *Courageous*, with the South Staffordshire Regiment on board, arrived from Malta, and she was expected early on the 28th at Jaffa.

Brigadier Dobbie, who on the morning of the 26th assumed, by mutual agreement, command of the forces of all three Services in Palestine and the police, had to decide how he would deploy these contingents as they arrived. Martial law had not been declared,

but a state of martial law existed *de facto*, including the essential unity of control which martial law provides. Although the key points had been secured, outlying districts were everywhere out of control of the small police posts, and all Jewish settlements were in the greatest danger, notably in the Hebron and Nablus districts and the settlements in the Maritime Plain and the Valley of Esdraelon. Brigadier Dobbie was faced with three problems in order of urgency.

- (a) The prevention of further attacks on the Jewish colonies.
- (b) The suppression of looting of colonies which had been attacked or evacuated.
- (c) The general restoration of order and re-establishment of civil control.

Clearly great dispersion of force was unavoidable, as it would be necessary to establish posts in many outlying places. At the same time every opportunity had to be taken to form reserves ready to move to threatened points, and every part of the force had to be given a high degree of mobility. The first two problems indicated active defence, whereas the third might entail offensive action of a punitive nature involving a greater measure of concentration; but its solution could be initiated in each district in conjunction with protective measures as opportunity offered.

Guided by these considerations, orders for the extension of defensive action to protect the Jewish settlements were as follows:

On 26th—(a) Naval landing-parties from H.M.S. *Sussex* to relieve C Company South Wales Borderers at Jaffa and the latter to move to the Ludd area.

(b) The company of the King's Regiment from Cairo to join South Wales Borderers at Jerusalem.

(c) South Wales Borderers to despatch a detachment to Hebron.

On 27th—(d) Green Howards from Cairo, less the company at Haifa, to move to Nablus-Jenin.

(e) Landing-parties from H.M.S. *Barham* to relieve the company of Green Howards at Haifa and latter to move to Afule.

On 28th—(f) South Staffords, on arrival from Malta by H.M.S. *Courageous*, to relieve C Company of South Wales Borderers in Ludd area and the latter to rejoin its battalion at Jerusalem.

It was arranged that the zone for which the naval landing parties at Jaffa and Haifa would be responsible should extend along the coast to about ten miles inland.

Mobility was to be secured by the extensive employment of locally requisitioned motor cars, buses and lorries, and by holding special trains in readiness. In two vital matters the luck of the Empire held good. The weather was dry and motor transport was able to operate on country tracks, and even across country. Also, neither Arabs nor Jews made any attempt to damage telephone lines, so that intercommunication was good even before the arrival of military signals with wireless equipment.

It is not necessary to follow the doings of the various detachments in different parts of the country in their rescue and protection work, but as an illustration of the sort of duties entailed we may go back to C Company of the South Wales Borderers, whom we



left at Jaffa on the morning of the 26th, having re-established order in that town and in its new neighbour, 'Tel Aviv.

At 6.15 A.M. H.M.S. *Sussex* anchored off the port and between 7 and 10 A.M. had landed six seamen and two marine platoons under the command of Captain Raikes, R.N., who at once commenced the relief of the South Wales Borderers. By 3 P.M. the relief was complete, the boundary of the responsibility of the Navy had been fixed, and motors had been collected to move the soldiers to their new area. The Navy took up such duties as finding escorts at the funerals of men killed on the previous day, and in general prevented any fresh outbreaks.

Lieut.-Colonel Petre having organised his company in two columns, each one with a Royal Air Force armoured car attached, moved off at 3.15 P.M., one column to Naaneh Station in the south and the other to Kalkita farther north.

The southern column under Colonel Petre was responsible for villages east of Ludd and those adjoining the southern side of the naval zone, while the other watched those to the north of the Navy. With Colonel Petre was Mr. Cook, one of the 100 special constables who had enrolled themselves, and who with their knowledge of the local languages and conditions rendered valuable service. Mr. Cook, in addition to his other qualifications, was the manager of the garage which had supplied the bulk of the motor transport and was therefore in a position to see that the drivers gave no trouble.

The cars of the southern column reached Naaneh at 4.45 P.M., and a short time afterwards Colonel Petre took a patrol to a village called Katra, reported

to be in danger. The report proved to be exaggerated, and having established a police post in the village for the night the patrol returned. Meanwhile a police officer had applied to the company sergeant-major left at Naaneh for a party to assist him at another village which was seen on fire, and a N.C.O. and five men had been sent.

At 7.30 P.M. two of these men came back to report that a large number of Arabs were threatening to loot the village (Khulde), so the armoured car and one platoon were despatched to deal with the situation. As this party approached the village heavy firing was heard. The infantry debussed and, headed by the armoured car, attacked the Arabs, who dispersed with casualties. In the village twenty-nine Jews alive and one dead were found in the one house left standing. The young lance-corporal with his three men of the first party had established themselves in a barn outside the house and had kept the Arabs off, inflicting many casualties: a good piece of work which probably saved the lives of the Jews, as although they had a fair supply of arms, the house they were in was on fire. The Arabs were taught a sharp lesson, as twenty-five were killed and some thirty wounded.

Next morning Colonel Petre was confronted with a new danger. Reports were received that the Bedouin Arabs were on the move; patrols saw many about, and an attack on Katra was anticipated. Colonel Petre decided in consequence to send a strong column to Katra that evening which might catch the Arabs in the act of attacking and give them a lesson, and which at any rate would protect the village. As a preliminary he removed the danger of trouble occurring elsewhere by evacuating the inhabitants of both the Jewish and

Arab villages of Akron, and by warning neighbouring people that anyone seen in the empty villages would be treated as hostile. It was known that attempts were being made to incite the more peaceful Arabs to attack the Jewish settlement. During the afternoon the column concentrated, and it consisted of the whole company reinforced by a platoon of naval ratings and two extra armoured cars.

It was a nice problem to fix the hour of starting. If it was fixed too early, warning would be given to the Arabs. If too late, much of the route would be difficult to traverse in the dark as the going was bad and the village might be destroyed before the column arrived. Actually the column started at 5.30 P.M., arrived at 11 P.M. and at once occupied a position reconnoitred on the occasion of the previous visit to the village. The column was sniped at one place on the route and while approaching the village, but no attack was made although there were many Arabs about. One encampment had been passed on the way, and though it was believed to belong to a peaceful tribe its sheikh was held hostage for the night.

Next morning it was found that all sign of the Bedouins had disappeared and, the country being quiet, the column returned and prepared to hand over to the South Staffords, who had now arrived to relieve them. On the morning of the 29th the company entrained to rejoin the battalion at Jerusalem. The activities of C Company had had a very steady effect on the whole of the Ludd district, and the movement of a large column at night, although without tangible result, produced the moral effect which follows when it is shown that the initiative has passed into the hands of the Government Forces.

To return now to the general situation which Brigadier Dobbie had to deal with. The threat of Bedouin activity mentioned above had on the 27th made the protection of Gaza an important matter. It was reported that 6000 Arabs were advancing towards the town from the south-east and there were no troops available to protect it. Actually a force of about 2000 Arabs had gathered, but aeroplanes sent out to reconnoitre and turn them back were unable to locate them. The best that could be done was to despatch two improvised armoured trains, mounting machine guns manned by naval personnel, as a protection to the town and if possible to the aerodrome. The presence of European women and children in the town added to the anxiety felt. Fortunately the Bedouin advance checked and tended to turn north-east, and on the 28th a political officer was able to get in touch with them and induce them to turn back. On that day, too, the arrival of a detachment of the South Staffords made the situation secure.

About this time, however, attempted incursions by Trans-Jordan Arabs also began to give cause for alarm, and continued to be a possible source of danger for some weeks; especially as it was necessary for the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force to find patrols in the Jordan Valley and on the Syrian frontier where there was unrest, until the duty could be taken over by Brigadier Dobbie's troops.

The arrival of the South Staffords on H.M.S. *Courageous* on the 28th completed Brigadier Dobbie's command, and the employment of the aircraft carrier as a troop carrier deserves some comment. Captain Brownrigg at Malta received orders at 1.47 A.M. on the 24th to raise steam, complete with fuel and stores,

and stand by to embark one battalion of troops. The purely naval part of this programme, including the stowage of stores, meant some twenty-four hours' work, and it was perhaps fortunate that the decision to embark troops was postponed, especially as he had no definite information as to what military stores and vehicles would be taken in addition to personnel. Intimation received that some 77 horses, 5 motor lorries and a large amount of fodder would accompany the troops was calculated to raise alarm and despondency. Fortunately these items did not materialise, and the unexpected appearance of 32 limbered wagons (or as they were reckoned by the Navy, 64 two-wheeled vehicles) was a sufficiently unpleasant shock when the embarkation actually commenced.

Definite orders for the embarkation of the battalion were finally received about midnight 25th-26th. Embarkation began at 3.40 A.M. on the 26th, and by 8.35 A.M. the battalion, at a strength of 734 with its 64 two-wheeled vehicles, was on board and the ship proceeded to sea: a performance which speaks for itself. Hangars provided shelter for the men sleeping on deck, and the central mess system, a feature of modern ships, greatly facilitated arrangements for feeding them. Heavy stores were stowed on the flying-off deck without difficulty, though cover could not be provided. Officers, needless to say, were well looked after and doubled up with their naval opposite numbers. To a mere soldier it seems surprising enough that so many men and stores could be squeezed on board, but even more so, that when the ship proceeded to sea, it was possible to "fly on" nineteen aircraft of three different types in the course of one and a half hours, and also, before troops were landed, to fly off

six machines urgently required on arrival at Jaffa. Disembarkation of the troops commenced at 6 A.M. on the 28th, and was completed by 9 A.M., forty-eight hours after leaving Malta.

By the 28th the general situation had become more satisfactory, and though isolated attempts at outrage had to be dealt with, the greater part of the country was under control. In fact, but for the danger of incursions across the frontier which demanded a reserve, the South Staffords from Malta might not have been required. As regards internal security, pacification of the Galilee area and the relief of the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force detachments on the Syrian frontier and in the Jordan Valley were the chief tasks still to be carried out. In the south Gaza was safe, but Beersheba was in a panic as the Bedouin tribesmen were still in the neighbourhood. Confidence was, however, restored there, first by the 12th Lancers' armoured cars and later by a company of the South Wales Borderers. The Navy were actively restoring settled conditions at Jaffa, Haifa, and in all the coastal area. The South Staffords not only controlled the Ludd area but constituted a reserve. In the Jerusalem area the South Wales Borderers and company of the King's had already initiated the final phase of restoration of order by carrying out raids on certain villages implicated in outrages, and prevented the recurrence of outbreaks. The Green Howards in the Nablus, Jenin and Afule districts had the situation in hand, and on them was imposed the task of taking over the Northern Frontier, Galilee and Jordan Valleys, assisted by the 12th Lancers. To enable this to be done a naval detachment, supplied by H.M.S. *Courageous*, was moved up to look after Nablus.

On the 29th, while the Green Howards were carrying out the extension northwards, a serious outbreak occurred at Safed near the Syrian Frontier which the small detachment of the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force and police in the town could not suppress. A party of Green Howards, however, arrived two hours after the outbreak occurred and restored order, although not before a considerable portion of the town had been burnt. The danger of incursions from Syria, where there was much excitement among the Arab population, was intensified by events at Safed, and parties actually crossed the frontier. The French authorities, however, responded promptly to requests to co-operate in preventing such movements, and though the Green Howards had to deal with small parties from across the frontier the danger was effectively checked.

Between the 29th August and 9th of September this battalion was actively employed in the Jordan Valley and Galilee area, a company of the South Staffords as well as the naval party at Nablus being attached to it to enable it to cover its enlarged area.

As security became assured the final stage of restoration of control was initiated. This involved tasks of a more offensive nature and took the form of raids on villages, or to capture individuals implicated in outrages. It was decided that all such raids should be carried out in co-operation with the police, who were responsible for making arrests and for the identification of wanted individuals. The troops surrounded villages and were authorised to, and did on occasions, use their weapons to prevent attempts at escape or to support the police in case of resistance. A large number of arrests were made, and the moral

effect of demonstrating that the police were once more in effective operation was produced. Much loot was recovered and valuable evidence, which facilitated subsequent investigations, collected. The deterrent effect of offensive action at once became evident, and with the cessation of fresh outbreaks it soon became possible to concentrate troops in their respective areas and to relieve the naval detachments.

On 9th September the detachment of the Fleet air arm and the landing party of *Courageous* were relieved, and by the 13th the contingents from *Sussex* and *Barham* were withdrawn. *Sussex* had landed 20 officers and 297 men, *Barham* 27 officers and 403 men.

The assistance provided by the naval parties had been invaluable. They had taken over the situation at Jaffa and Haifa while it was still very critical and had re-established order in the whole coastal area, thus liberating troops for the work inland. Being self-contained, questions of supply and administration were proportionately simplified. It must be remembered, however, that the employment of large naval detachments on shore is an emergency measure which cannot be continued for a very long period. Arrangements for their early relief should not be lost sight of. This is particularly the case when a highly specialised unit like an aircraft carrier is concerned.

On the relief of the Navy the country was finally divided into three areas:

- (a) Northern area—Galilee, Haifa and the Plain of Esdraelon. Troops: Green Howards, 1 company South Staffords and Armoured Car Squadron 12th Lancers.
- (b) Jaffa and Nablus area. South Staffords less 1 company.



(c) Jerusalem and Hebron area. South Wales Borderers.

Within these areas troops were concentrated as far as possible and all outlying detachments were relieved.

With the final redistribution of troops Brigadier Dobbie's task was accomplished and responsibility for defence was re-transferred to the Royal Air Force on 12th September. The military force in the country was, however, maintained, and though by degrees reduced in strength, two battalions are still stationed in Palestine.

A distinguished general once said, on receiving a reward for the part he had played in restoring order, that he felt he ought to thank the Government for engineering the situation which had given him his opportunity. The three fighting Services might similarly have claimed that they owed it to the Government rather than to the Arabs or Jews that they had such an opportunity of demonstrating their utility.

The lessons of Palestine are more political than military. Having accepted responsibility for a situation bound to give rise to intense communal friction one would have expected the Government to have taken reasonable precautions to ensure the maintenance of order. Clearly the situation required firmness and tact in the exercise of control, but firmness without adequate backing may degenerate into bluff, and tact by itself may be interpreted as weakness. If Mr. Luke in the first instance had adopted a firmer attitude and had prohibited the demonstration at the Wailing Wall he would to a large extent have had to rely on bluff. It might have succeeded, but if it had failed the situation might well have developed more quickly and

with even greater violence. By relying on tact he at least gained time.

Time being gained, one may feel surprise that the opportunity was not taken to summon assistance earlier. It has been remarked that when military support for the civil power is needed it is generally called in too late and sent away too soon. The fact that the military adviser of the local Government was an officer of the Royal Air Force introduced a complication, as he could provide little assistance to the police from the resources of his own Service and was not in direct touch with the sources from which ground troops could be provided. This is one of the disadvantages of having two branches of the fighting Services responsible for land defence, under separate authorities. A partial remedy is to unify control in each locality by supplementing the Service responsible with detachments of the other Service. Thus in Iraq a very considerable force of ground troops of one description or another has been at the disposal of the Royal Air Force, and the same course has been adopted in Palestine since the incident we have been discussing.

In the *ad hoc* arrangement adopted in Palestine to secure unity of control, command devolved on an Army officer. This sudden change in the incidence of responsibility at a moment of stress, involving as it did the supersession of the officer familiar with local conditions by one who was not, must raise doubts as to the wisdom of the normal organisation. Presumably questions of seniority in rank and the leading part which fell to the Army were responsible for the change, but it speaks volumes for the good sense of the officers of all three Services that unity of command was

accepted by mutual agreement on the spot, before it was confirmed later by authority in London. Admirable co-operation between the three Services was secured, each Service carrying out the tasks for which it was specially fitted.

As the disturbances were of a purely communal nature, unaccompanied by any attempt to attack Government Forces or to interfere with their movements, the duties of the troops were essentially those of police, although they at times became involved in the fighting to an extent which necessitated the use of their weapons under conditions approaching those of war.

Brigadier Dobbie was, however, faced with a very definite military problem when invasion by trans-frontier Arabs in large number appeared likely to occur. Such an invasion would have changed the whole character of his task from a police operation to one of war. The Royal Air Force, although it could break up large bodies of Arabs and on the whole very efficiently protect the frontier, could not prevent the infiltration of small parties. Had these penetrated in considerable numbers and coalesced at any point, a serious danger requiring a concentration of ground troops to deal with it would have arisen. Actually some parties did get through but not in sufficient numbers to make change of plans necessary. The great dispersion of his force, which Brigadier Dobbie had decided to be essential to bring about a rapid restoration of order and to save the scattered Jewish settlements, would undoubtedly have been a source of danger if a considerable invasion had taken place. Realising, however, that rapid restoration of order in Palestine was the best way to remove the incentive

that the Arabs outside had to intervene, he refused to be diverted from his original plan, although temptation to sacrifice outlying districts in the interests of concentration must have been considerable. Maintenance of the objective once again proved a sound principle, to which the principle of concentration had for the moment to give way. One can easily catalogue the principles of war, but to decide which one must dominate a given situation is not so simple.

The rapidity with which the Navy and troops came to the rescue is very striking, and again showed the value of the chain of garrisons on our overseas lines of communication, and the danger we would run if they were superseded by air defence, or cut so low as to be unable to give each other mutual support. The speed with which a comparatively small force was able to restore order is also remarkable, but there is a danger of over-optimistic deductions being drawn from the performance. The very high degree of mobility which it was possible to give the troops by the employment of motor transport had the effect of immensely increasing their ubiquity and compensated for lack of numbers. Had the weather been wet or had anti-Government action by the rioters interfered with movements by rail, a very much larger force would have been required to establish control, and a considerable percentage of mounted troops would have been essential. Could our Mediterranean garrisons have spared more troops, especially if the situation in Egypt had at the moment been critical?

It may be suggested that, if rain had interfered with motor transport, troop carriers of the Royal Air Force would have served to distribute troops as required; but the question of suitable landing grounds,

particularly in wet weather, imposes strict limitations on their employment.

In a situation such as developed in Palestine there is really no substitute for motor transport. It has not only the advantage of speed, and easiness of control, but it brings men fresh to the spot where they are required with sufficient food to make them self-contained for several days. If the outbreak had occurred a few months later in wet weather, one can picture men toiling exhausted through mud and arriving eventually too late.

Martial law, as we have seen, was not proclaimed and the necessity for it was not felt. This is somewhat surprising and it is worth while to attempt to analyse the reasons why the *de facto* existence of martial law proved a satisfactory solution. There appear to be several good reasons. A formal proclamation of martial law was not necessary because:

- (a) Unity of control had been secured by mutual agreement.
- (b) The situation was so urgent that the troops could without restriction exercise their civic right and duty of assisting the police to prevent crime. Moreover, necessity for immediate action was always apparent, and this covered measures of the nature of martial law.
- (c) The outrages which were being committed were crimes under the civil law. Such offences as spying, and damaging Government property, which call for summary treatment in their suppression, had not occurred.

On the other hand, formal martial law would have had the disadvantage of imposing on the small mili-

tary staff the organisation of its administration, the issue of proclamations, the setting up of military courts, etc. It would have been difficult to find personnel for courts, and the courts would have found it hard to decide who were the real offenders and how far acts of violence were committed in self-defence. All the circumstances pointed to the necessity of arrests and deliberate investigation rather than summary punishment. The duty of the troops was to separate the combatants, and they could leave it to the civil power to deal with the rights and wrongs of the quarrel in due course.

Although on occasions the troops had to use their weapons freely when intervening, yet the principle of using the minimum amount of force necessary was adhered to, and stringent orders for strict control of fire were in force. In every case troops when possible acted in close co-operation with the police, especially when raids were carried out to effect arrests. Troops surrounded the villages and prevented, by fire when necessary, wanted men from escaping, but the actual arrests were carried out by the police. The native personnel of the police appears to have worked very well and their British officers maintained the closest touch with the Army, to whom they gave invaluable assistance. Although the civil government, and to some extent the police, were accused of partiality as a result of well-intentioned efforts at conciliation, there appear to have been no complaints of undue severity against the troops in spite of their more drastic action, and no bitter feeling arose from the part they played.

When one considers how the officers and men of the three Services were rushed into a very acute

situation in unfamiliar surroundings one must admire the speed with which order was restored. A very high standard of initiative, energy and common sense must have prevailed to have produced such uniformly good results from small detachments scattered over the country, each acting on its own responsibility.

## CHAPTER X

### PESHAWAR DISTRICT, 1930

THE conditions which prevailed on the North-West Frontier of India in 1930 gave rise to a military situation of an unusual character. Normally troops stationed in that area may be called on to repel raids by the tribesmen from across the border, and to conduct punitive operations. Their main duty is the protection of the inhabitants living peaceably within the border from the wild men, their neighbours on the other side. A number of troops occupy certain areas across the administrative border, notably Waziristan, to achieve the same object by introducing more civilised and prosperous conditions into tribal territory.

In 1930, however, the trouble originated within the administrative frontier, and though external aggression occurred, it was directed against the Government and not against the inhabitants for whose safety the Government was responsible, yet who for the time being were also hostile to, if not actually in arms against it. As a result of these conditions the troops were called on simultaneously to deal with three distinct forms of hostile action which at times overlapped, and all arose from closely connected causes.

They were required:

- (1) To aid the civil power in suppressing riots and putting down internal subversive movements.
- (2) To repel hostile invaders acting in sympathy



with, and receiving assistance from the internal subversive movement.

(3) To conduct purely military operations to suppress, in trans-frontier areas, where control is a normal military responsibility, hostile action stirred up by the general unrest and by the same subversive influence as had caused trouble elsewhere.

In this chapter the purely military operations required to restore stable conditions in the trans-frontier areas will not be dealt with; and where military operations to repel invasion overlapped with police operations to suppress internal unrest, only the main incidents will be recorded in any detail.

The circumstances under which troops were called out, and acted in aid of the civil power in the initial internal disturbances, will be given at somewhat disproportionate length, as they present some rather remarkable features and were largely the origin of subsequent developments.

It may be noted that although operations of a military character, in which the Army and Royal Air Force took part on a very considerable scale, were conducted almost continuously between the months of May and September, complete control was never vested in the military authority, as would be the case in war. The Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier province remained in control throughout; and although the Commander-in-Chief of the northern command naturally acted in close co-operation with him, and was responsible for the actual conduct of the operations of the troops, he did not assume command of, nor was he responsible for, the operations of the Royal Air Force.

In a sense, therefore, war conditions at no time

prevailed and the Army and Royal Air Force were called on separately, though, of course, often in close co-operation, to aid the civil power: a curious and anomalous state of affairs.

The origin of the outbreak lay in the Congress Swaraj agitation and its alliance with the local representatives of the Khilafat movement. The latter were under the influence of the prominent anti-British agitator, Abdul Ghaffar, who was largely responsible for the development, from the local Youth and Moslem movement, of a semi-military organisation commonly known as the "Red Shirts". The "Red Shirts" worked in close co-operation with the local Congress agitators in spreading disaffection which gained ground rapidly during the winter of 1929-30. Peshawar city was the centre of the subversive agitation, with branch organisations in all the principal towns of the province. From these centres every effort was made to spread unrest among the more ignorant inhabitants of the towns and surrounding villages. Local grievances were exploited and Government measures grossly misrepresented. Among others the Sarda Act, which had recently been passed for the reform of marriage laws in India, was misrepresented as an attack on Moslem family life, in order to stir up fanaticism.

During March and April 1930 the agitation, especially in Peshawar itself, became intensified to such a degree that the civil authorities could no longer tolerate the activities of its leaders and decided on their arrest. This proved to be the spark which set the inflammable material alight.

On 22nd April warrants were issued for the arrest of twelve of the leaders, and instructions were given

for the arrests to be carried out early the following morning. The deputy Commissioner (Mr. Metcalfe) responsible for the local situation, entrusted the execution of the warrants to the police, but, realising that disturbances might follow the arrests, arranged that the troops of the "City Disturbance Column" should be in readiness to intervene at half an hour's notice.

This column, which had been organised, as part of the general internal security scheme, to deal with possible trouble in the city, consisted at the time of: one squadron (less two troops) Poona Horse; one company (less two platoons) 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and one company (less two platoons) 2/18th Garhwal Rifles (both in lorries); one section Armoured Car Company (4 cars) and one motor ambulance. The column was commanded by a field officer not commanding a battalion, and commanders were changed once a month.

An immediate reserve to the column was provided by the remainder of the squadron and infantry companies concerned, with the addition of another complete company from each of the battalions which furnished them.

The police succeeded in carrying out the arrest of ten of the persons required without difficulty early in the morning, but the houses of the other two were searched without result and it was not till 8 A.M. that news was received that the men were at the Congress office. An hour later a party of fourteen police in two motor lorries started for this office. By that time news of the first arrests had spread and people had begun to gather in the streets. When the police reached the office they found the two wanted men addressing a

crowd from the verandah. No attempt, however, was made to resist arrest, in fact the men came down to surrender voluntarily and got into one of the lorries without demur. The lorries then drove off, intending to take a route which would avoid as far as possible passing through the heart of the city.

It may be here explained that Peshawar is a walled city of 100,000 inhabitants, who incidentally are notoriously turbulent and addicted to crimes of violence. The city is intersected by a number of main streets some thirty to forty feet broad, leading generally to the various city gates, but the side streets are narrow lanes running between high buildings. As is the case with most walled towns, the city is highly congested and both streets and lanes normally are crowded.

The police had entered the town by the Kabuli gate which furnishes direct access to the city from the cantonment where the military lines and residences of officials are situated. The Kabuli gate leads into the Kissa Khawani Bazar, a main street some 320 yards long which is prolonged by a street through the heart of the city till, after about 200 yards, a cross-roads leading to the Kacheri gate on the north side of the city is reached, in the neighbourhood of the Hastings Memorial. From the Memorial to the Kacheri gate is only 250 yards and from the Kacheri gate to the Kabuli gate a main road skirts the outside of the city.

The police had intended to take the route passing the Hastings Memorial to the Kacheri gate and thence by the road outside the city leading westwards to the jail, which lies on the road between the cantonment and Kabuli gate.



The lorries started but, on the way, were stopped several times by the crowd before they reached the Hastings Memorial where another crowd was encountered. Here the two lorries became separated. That containing the prisoners was surrounded, had its tyres cut and rendered incapable of movement, while the other went forward. The small party of police were helpless, and in the end had to accept a suggestion, made by the prisoners, who were endeavouring to pacify the crowd, that they should be allowed to proceed on foot to the jail escorted by the crowd. The prisoners, after being duly garlanded by the crowd who were shouting "Long live revolution", proceeded, escorted by a procession, to the Kabuli gate, to which also the police made their way by the road outside the city.

News of these disturbances, which being accompanied by violence amounted to rioting, had been telephoned to the Superintendent of Police (Mr. Fooks) in the cantonment. The police force at his disposal consisted of about 390 men, most of whom were distributed between the various divisions of the city, although there were two parties, each about 60 strong, in reserve in the cantonment and police lines. Mr. Fooks at once decided to call up his reserves and informed his subordinates in the city that he would communicate his orders from the police station on the north side of the Kissa Khawani Bazar at the Kabuli gate. The city magistrate, an Indian, was also on duty at the station.

Mr. Fooks before proceeding to the city went to discuss the situation with the Deputy Commissioner. Reports up till then had been to the effect that the crowd had assembled outside the Kabuli gate, that

the police station was being stoned and that its gate had been closed.

While with Mr. Metcalfe, Mr. Fooks received a more reassuring message from the city magistrate indicating that the crowd was dispersing. It deprecated calling in military assistance which might only cause trouble. In view of the conflicting nature of the reports from the city, Mr. Metcalfe quite correctly decided to go to see the situation for himself before calling for military assistance. Unfortunately, however, he took a step which, largely owing to a series of minor misunderstandings, was to have far-reaching and disastrous results. In order to provide himself with a personal escort which he judged might be necessary to enable him to get far enough to see what was happening, he called for the section of armoured cars from the City Disturbance Column to report at his bungalow. It must be clearly understood that there was no intention to use the cars to disperse the mob or as a reinforcement for the police, though it was apparently hoped that their appearance would have some moral effect.

To anyone not intimately acquainted with their potentialities and limitations, the speed and armour of the cars appeared to make them suitable for the purpose for which it had occurred to Mr. Metcalfe to use them. He had perhaps not realised that the armoured car relies to a very large extent on its mobility. Deprived of its mobility it becomes vulnerable, especially when attacked from close quarters. Its machine guns cannot fire in all directions at once or on the ground immediately around it, and when it is closed up the view of its crew is very restricted. If, on the other hand, it is opened up, to obtain a better view or to use

revolvers to check a close attack, its small crew becomes vulnerable for lack of armour protection.

Loss of mobility was an almost necessary corollary of the employment of the cars in a crowded street. To drive vehicles of their weight and size at any speed through narrow crowded streets would inevitably mean inflicting large numbers of indiscriminate casualties of a revolting nature; the limited view of the driver intensifying the danger. Mr. Metcalfe also probably failed to realise the difficulty of communicating orders from one car to another, which entails cars frequently having to act on "follow my leader" methods; the more so as at least half the cars were in charge of N.C.O.'s who, except in extreme cases of self-defence, had no authority to fire without orders and were therefore in a difficult position if they lost touch.<sup>1</sup>

The four cars, organised in two subsections, each commanded by an officer, reported as requested at Mr. Metcalfe's bungalow, and he started for the city in his own car followed by the armoured vehicles, with a despatch rider on a motor bicycle accompanying each subsection.

When near the jail the party met an officer coming from the city who gave a reassuring account of the situation. Mr. Metcalfe consequently ordered the cars to remain in a compound near by while he himself with Mr. Fooks, who joined them at this point, proceeded towards the city. After they had gone a short way, however, these two were met by a young probationary police officer who had been ordered by Mr. Fooks to follow and take charge of one of the

<sup>1</sup> King's Regulations have since been amended and now authorise N.C.O.'s to open fire in certain cases.



parties of police reserves. This officer, who appeared to be rather shaken, had reached the Kabuli gate alone, and he reported that he had been heavily stoned and had come back for assistance as the police reserve had been insufficient to cope with the situation. He painted what was probably an over-lurid picture, due to inexperience and the difficulty he had in getting his horse to face an excited mob, but his story induced Mr. Metcalfe to send back for the armoured cars. They in consequence followed to a point about 100 yards short of the Kabuli gate, where the crowd had gathered and appeared to be in a violent mood.

Mr. Metcalfe now considered three alternatives:

(1) 'To do nothing for the moment, but wait for the arrival of the troops to deal with rioters, if they did not in the meantime disperse of their own accord. The troops, who were about two miles away, could hardly arrive for an hour or so, though lorries for their conveyance were available.

(2) 'To use the police to disperse the crowd, which they were unlikely to accomplish without firing.

(3) 'To further reconnoitre the situation, using the armoured cars for the double purpose of protection and of a display of force which would induce the crowd to disperse without bloodshed.

Mr. Metcalfe adopted the last alternative, evidently looking on the cars as invulnerable in themselves and sufficiently formidable in appearance to impress the mob without the risk of inflicting damage on innocent spectators. For his own safety in passing through the crowd, he consequently got into the leading armoured car, but he apparently gave no instructions for the other cars to follow him, nor was he aware that they would automatically do so if orders to the contrary

were not given. He appears to have acted on the spur of the moment without consulting Captain King, the officer commanding the section. The latter was in a difficult position; he had been detached to report to Mr. Metcalfe in ignorance of the situation or what action was expected of him. Till it became a question of using his weapons or of direct collision with the mob, he would naturally follow Mr. Metcalfe's movements as an escort. He seems to have failed to grasp at once that when he was called on to enter the city, it was to embark on a definite military operation - the conduct of a reconnaissance in the midst of a hostile crowd. He did not in consequence follow the principle of ascertaining the situation for himself or assume responsibility for the military plan of action. He confined himself to ordering the second subsection of cars to follow the first, and the two despatch riders on no account to enter the city.

There is considerable conflict of evidence as to the details of the events which followed, but the small Committee appointed to enquire into the whole incident established the salient facts.

The four cars - named and moving in the following order: Bray, Bullicourt, Bethune and Bapaume - passed through the Kabuli gate and came in close contact with the crowd, which greeted them with brickbats and stones. Either before or as they entered the city they closed down, and, to avoid running over the people, their speed was kept down to four or five miles per hour. An interval of about twenty yards between the cars was maintained. "Bray", in which were Mr. Metcalfe and Captain King, driving carefully, succeeded in reaching the end of the street, where it turned and came back through the gate,

turned again and drew up by the police station. In its progress it may, as was claimed by certain witnesses, have collided with some of the mob, although the occupants were unaware of it. Unfortunately, contrary to his orders and probably not wishing to be out of anything that might happen, one of the despatch riders attempted to follow "Bray" in the interval between it and "Bullicourt". It is possible that if "Bray" collided with any of the crowd it may have still further inflamed the violent temper of the mob, but it is more probable that the people were already in a sufficiently violent mood to take advantage of the position of this defenceless man. In any case, it is abundantly clear that almost immediately a murderous attack was made on him; by one man, at least, with an axe and by others with sticks. He was knocked down and killed. The driver of "Bullicourt", seeing the assault, immediately accelerated to help, pulling up, as he judged, just short of where the man was down. Two cars behind, seeing "Bullicourt" accelerate, accelerated too, and when "Bullicourt" stopped "Bethune" bumped into her and "Bapaume" bumped "Bethune". Whether as a result of these bumps or because the driver, who was unable to see the ground immediately in front of his car, misjudged the distance, it is certain that "Bullicourt" ran over and stopped on the body of the despatch rider. It is also certain that when they accelerated these three cars knocked down and ran over several members of the crowd. The result of these happenings was that the three cars stopped close to the police station. The two rear cars backed clear, but the steering gear of "Bapaume" was damaged and she remained across the road while "Bethune" drew up beside "Bullicourt".

This was the situation which Mr. Metcalfe found on his return in "Bray"; and he got out at the police station, joining the police officers in front of it who were attempting to induce the crowd to disperse.

"Bray" took station behind "Bullicourt", and Lieut. Syngé, in command of the second subsection, getting out of "Bethune" with an automatic in his hand, was immediately attacked by a man who tried to get the pistol and turn it against him. Lieut. Syngé was with difficulty rescued by Mr. Metcalfe and some police and the crowd became increasingly violent, attacking the cars with crowbars and axes as well as stoning them. The fact that the cars had run down some people no doubt added to the violence of the mob.

About this time someone in the crowd produced a drum of oil or petrol and with part of it succeeded in setting fire to "Bethune", while the remainder was poured over the body of the despatch rider and set alight. When the crew of "Bethune" found their car alight they made a dash for the shelter of "Bray", and managed to force their way to it, using their revolvers quite justifiably in self-protection.

So far no order to fire had been given, and as Mr. Metcalfe about this time had been stunned temporarily by a stone, there was some doubt as to who could give the order. Eventually Mr. Metcalfe in a half-dazed condition appears to have given permission to fire, but there was great difficulty in communicating the order to the men in the cars. Lieut. Syngé had to fight his way to "Bray", using his pistol, in order to inform Captain King, who in the meanwhile, quite correctly, in defence of his car, had shot a man who was attempting to climb on to its roof. When he received the

order to fire, Captain King brought his machine gun into action and fired two bursts of ten rounds each, the cartridges having been intentionally spaced in tens when the cars were detailed for employment with the City Disturbance Column.

The effect of opening fire was to clear the street at once, which shows that the crowd was even then not so violent as to be unconcerned for its own safety, and indicates that at an earlier stage before the cars entered the city it would probably have dispersed on the mere threat of fire.

When the street cleared Captain King took "Bray" some 150 to 200 yards up it, stopping at the first main cross-roads. He then came back himself to ask for infantry reinforcements, and after half an hour or so a police cordon was established in front of the car to keep the crowd back. A fire-engine was also produced to help to extinguish the burning car, but it had to connect with a hydrant near the crowd now collected in front of "Bray", and the people, seeing what was being done, surged forward and rendered it useless.

It was about 10.45 when Captain King was first ordered to fire, and at about that time a message had been telephoned from "A" Division police station to Brigade Headquarters calling for the remainder of the City Disturbance Column, which was accordingly ordered to its rendezvous at 10.57. A few minutes later, in consequence of a second message, troops were directed straight to the Kabuli gate. The first to arrive was the detachment of King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, which reached the gate about 11.40, followed after a few minutes by the detachment of Poona Horse. At the request of the police the latter party moved through the city to the Kacheri gate,

where it remained in position. The mob at this time were still in a subdued state and the cavalry got through the city with no worse greetings than a few bricks and revolutionary cries.

About midday the crowd, encouraged probably by the purely defensive attitude of the police and troops, began to pluck up courage again and, again at the request of the police, the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry detachment moved up in close support of the police cordon in front of "Bray", one platoon immediately behind and two sections protecting either flank of the cordon. At the same time more troops were asked for, and two platoons of the Garhwalis which had arrived at the Kacheri gate were brought by the road outside the city to the Kabuli gate. On their arrival about 12.45 they were moved up in immediate support of the police cordon on either side of the car, replacing the men of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, who then became a third line. The replacement was carried out on the suggestion of the police, who considered that Indian troops would have a less irritating effect on the crowd than British.

By this time, in spite of the efforts of Mr. Isemonger, the Inspector-General of Police of the province, who had now arrived and taken over control, the crowd had become active. Although Mr. Isemonger at great personal risk stood in front of the troops and attempted to pacify the people and induce them to disperse, the mob pressed forward; stone-throwing became more frequent and a barricade began to be formed right against the front of the car, composed of packing-cases and carts. Fearing that an attempt might be made to burn the car, Captain

Gatehouse, who had relieved Captain King, with Mr. Isemonger's permission, drove his car some twenty to thirty yards forward to break down the barricade, afterwards returning to his original station, though he had observed another barricade being constructed some 100 yards farther up the street. This was still merely a defensive measure, to give temporary relief and unlikely to impress the mob, which soon pressed forward again, this time definitely with the idea of burning the car. To protect it Mr. Isemonger agreed that a cordon of troops should be placed in front. The Garhwalis were accordingly ordered to advance and push back the crowd. The crowd, however, proved much too dense to be moved and the only result was to bring the troops into close physical contact with it, contrary to principles. As was only to be expected, a number of hand-to-hand encounters took place; and as contact was too close to allow the troops to use rifles or bayonets effectively, they were forced back by weight of numbers, suffering casualties from blows of lathis, stones, and packing-cases used as missiles. In the *mêlée* a few shots were fired in self-protection, justifiably, the Committee of Enquiry held, but without orders.

Captain Gatehouse and Major Penny, commanding the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry detachment, now asked Mr. Isemonger for his instructions as to firing and received permission to use a minimum amount of fire if the troops were seriously attacked or driven back, with the proviso that fire was to be avoided if possible. Shortly after this the Garhwali line was broken through the centre near "Bray", and Captain Gatehouse ordered his machine gun to fire. Ten single shots only were fired by it, but a few more

rounds were fired from rifles under the orders of two N.C.O.'s of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry who, although they did not, owing to the noise, hear any order to fire, judged that it had been given when they heard the machine gun.

The firing took place about 1.20 and the effect was to cause the mob to disperse immediately. The Committee of Enquiry considered that all the firing which took place up to this point was amply justified and expressed an appreciation of the high standard of discipline shown by the troops. The Garhwalis especially had been very highly tested. For over an hour they had stood up against immensely superior numbers and had been much knocked about. The few shots they fired were to save men or rifles from falling into the hands of the mob.

After the dispersal of the mob a definite attempt was at last made to carry out counter-measures for the restoration of order. Patrols of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry advanced up the streets and fired some shots at men throwing bricks from the tops of houses. Ultimately stronger parties and a section of armoured cars carried out organised movements to clear the streets, removing a number of barricades which were found.

As a result of the firing which took place during the day, in the course of which 30 rounds were fired from the machine gun of the "Bray", 73 from rifles and 27 from revolvers, 30 people were killed and 33 wounded.

The city remained quiet during the night and till troops were withdrawn from it on the following night. The riots, however, proved to be a prelude to a much more extensive anti-Government movement of a



different order, and it may be well here to discuss some of the rather remarkable features of the events which have been narrated in detail before outlining the course of subsequent events.

Taken by themselves, the events of 23rd April represent an ordinary case of calling out troops in aid of the civil power and not one in which the control has been handed over temporarily to the military authorities. It is impossible, therefore, to avoid discussing the decisions of civilian officials which affected the action of soldiers. This will not be done with any desire to criticise individuals but in order to draw attention to departures from "principles" which led to many of the unfortunate occurrences of the day. It is fully realised that the civilian officials were influenced by a desire to carry out loyally the spirit of the policy of extreme conciliation imposed on them, and they shared with the troops the dangers and handicaps the policy involved. The whole episode is instructive as showing how a comparatively minor disturbance may, if not handled firmly from the first, grow to something much more serious.

At a very early stage, when it attacked the police lorry and released the prisoners, the crowd had become an unlawful assembly guilty of rioting, so that the Deputy Commissioner would have been fully justified, if his police force was inadequate, in calling for military assistance to assist him; an organised body of troops was in existence to meet such a contingency and wisely it had been placed at short notice. Was Mr. Metcalfe justified, however, in asking for a particular portion of the force to be placed at his disposal? The general rule is that the military authority is responsible for the numbers and type of troops

to be sent in aid of the civil power and for the method of their employment. But in India there are certain modifications of general rules. The civilian authority can demand assistance of troops, and the military authority is not only bound to comply, but the commander is bound to use force when called on to do so by the civil officer. The method of employing force and the extent to which it is used remain, however, the responsibility of the commander.

Furthermore, in India the civil authority is entitled to advise as to the class of troops to be employed, on account of his special knowledge of the characteristics of the people to be dealt with. Such advice would generally turn on the question of whether British troops or some special class of Indian troops was most suitable, but advice is not limited to the racial aspect of the situation. Final decision as to the type of troops to be employed rests with the military authority, but in practice civil advice would generally be taken so far as it did not conflict with other military commitments. Mr. Metcalfe's request would therefore appear to have been a misapplication rather than a violation of normal procedure, and the further question arises whether the military commander should have acceded to the request without full knowledge of the situation and the purpose to which the cars would be put. One might have expected the commander of the City Disturbance Column, who was responsible for the method of employing his force, to satisfy himself on these points before parting with a detachment, in order that he might instruct his subordinate before the detachment passed out of his direct control, and in order to be certain that the cars were the most suitable instrument. As, however, the troops were

only standing to in their own lines and not concentrated, it is possible he knew nothing of Mr. Metcalfe's request. The records do not reveal how this request was communicated, but it was probably made to Brigade Headquarters and by it transmitted as an order direct to the Armoured Car Company. The material point is that the commander of the column, the responsible military officer, had a detachment over which he had lost power of control, and had not established personal touch with the civilian magistrate as regards its use. Responsibility for the method of employing the cars, therefore, devolved unexpectedly on a subordinate commander who had evidently been left very vague as to the nature of his task.

The extra powers given to magistrates in India, if they are not to be abused, increase rather than diminish the necessity of close touch with the responsible military officer. As it was, Mr. Metcalfe seems to have exceeded his powers in ordering the cars into the city, apparently without consulting Captain King; and the latter seems hardly to have realised his responsibilities as an officer commanding a detachment until he became engaged in the affray. Once the use of force became imperatively necessary the military officers appear to have acted with great coolness and discretion, although their task was made more difficult by the unwillingness of the civil authorities to sanction the use of fire. This hesitation, though presumably dictated by the policy prevailing, entailed, it can hardly be doubted, greater sacrifice of life in the long run.

The Committee of Enquiry which investigated all the events of 20th April discussed at considerable length the employment of armoured cars in dealing

with unarmed mobs. The members of the Committee were clearly of the opinion that armoured cars should not have been employed, nor have formed part of the City Disturbance Column at all. Although they admitted that in several respects the cars might prove useful on occasion, they were more impressed by the danger of their misuse. It is difficult to agree with this point of view, which indicates a desire to make restrictive regulations on the basis of an isolated and admitted mistake.

One may agree with the Committee that armoured cars should not be used to attempt to disperse a dense unarmed crowd, and that the moral effect of the appearance of armoured cars is likely to be over-estimated. On the other hand, there are uses to which cars can be put effectively, such as patrolling streets to keep them clear once rioters have been dispersed, which tend to economy of effort and speed in restoring control. The lesson one would draw is rather the necessity of military and civil officers understanding both the limitations and potentialities of the forces at their disposal, and of junior officers realising their responsibilities when called on by the civil authorities to act. Given that measure of knowledge, armoured cars would often form a useful adjunct to the military force summoned in aid of the civil power, and there would be little fear of their being employed on tasks for which their characteristics render them unsuitable.

Another point of interest to soldiers raised by the Committee was, how far, after a crowd has been dispersed by fire, it is legitimate for the troops to continue to use fire against individual members of the crowd who continue to employ violence. It will be remembered that patrols of the King's Own Yorkshire

Light Infantry fired at individuals who continued to throw bricks from house-tops. The two members of the Committee differed on the point, but the Government of India supported the opinion of the member who considered that the troops were justified, as firing was not indiscriminate but properly controlled and no more than the situation required. The initial sanction to use fire to disperse the crowd covered its further use to protect the patrol; while brick-throwing continued, the crowd had not been effectively dispersed. This is a useful ruling and clears up a somewhat doubtful point. Officers in similar circumstances will, however, be wise to be very careful what orders they give and to act with circumspection. It is easy to bring charges of vindictive reprisals. Arrests if they can be effected, as was not practicable in this case, are a more satisfactory method than the continued use of fire.

To complete the catalogue of instances in which there was a departure from normal practice on this unfortunate, if instructive, day, attention may again be called to the defensive attitude imposed on the troops; to the mistake made in allowing troops to come into physical contact with the mob; and to the hesitancy in sanctioning the use of fire when it was clearly required.

If one analyses the course of events, one sees that troops called in to suppress rioting spent most of their time defending themselves, and that fire when used was either for individual self-protection or to prevent the troops being overwhelmed. In no case, in consequence, was the crowd warned that fire would be opened and only indirectly had it the effect of dispersing the mob. There are clear indications that if at

an early stage the crowd had failed to disperse after clear warning, very few shots would have been needed to bring about dispersal.

To turn now to subsequent events.

As has been described, the troops remained in occupation of the city during the 24th April and the situation was well in hand. The dangers of an over-conciliatory policy and the value of firmness had not, however, been yet fully brought home to authority. The Chief Commissioner, after an interview with some of the leading citizens of Peshawar on the afternoon of the 24th, ordered all troops to be withdrawn from the city, and this was done the same night.

By no stretch of the imagination could this be characterised as firm action likely to impress an excited people or likely to succeed in checking a revolutionary movement. It is not surprising, therefore, that during the next ten days Government control in the city became practically non-existent and the activities of the agitators were redoubled. Misrepresentation of the events of the 23rd provided fresh material with which to spread the "Red Shirt" movement, not only in the city but in all the surrounding districts; while news of the condition of affairs reached the tribes across the frontier by rumour and through emissaries of the agitators. It soon became apparent that a change of policy was imperative.

On the 4th May at dawn troops occupied, by surprise and without firing, all the principal tactical points in the city. From that time on, until the end of August, troops remained in the city in support of the police and local control was secured. Rioting was renewed on only one occasion when the death of a

woman and her two children was caused by the accidental discharge of a rifle. The temper of the rioters was at white heat as a result of the incident, but in spite of this a few single shots sufficed to disperse them.

The wider consequences of a mistaken policy of passivity were not to be so easily eliminated. The mischief had been done.

Events in Peshawar had stimulated congress activities in Kohat and other towns, and arrests of leaders were carried out at various centres during the month of May. As, however, the precaution of employing troops to support the police when carrying out the arrests was taken before, and not after, trouble occurred, no serious rioting took place. A more formidable development was the general unrest which spread rapidly among all the trans-frontier tribes from Malakand to South Waziristan. Stories invented of atrocities committed by troops and concerning the Sarda Act worked as a stimulant, but a widespread belief in the approaching downfall of British rule was the basic cause. The tribesmen were assured by agents that the local population would assist any lashkar which crossed the border, and in confirmation of the agents' stories the immunity of Red Shirt activities was noted. The tribesmen were also told that Indian troops would not fight against them. Fortunately, the older men in each tribe were less credulous than the young men and the more fanatical mullahs; consequently internal disunion in the tribes reduced the extent of the threatened danger. The older men had more to lose and had learnt by experience that the inaction of Government was at times deceptive and might be followed by an unexpected display of

activity. The restraint they were able to exercise was not, however, sufficient to prevent outbreaks.

From the beginning of May till the end of August troops and the Royal Air Force were actively engaged in dealing with aggressive action by the tribesmen, which either threatened or actually matured; while at the same time troops and police were constantly engaged in dealing with the subversive action of Congress and Red Shirt bands within the frontier, which was closely connected with the tribal unrest, both stimulating it and being stimulated by it. The aggressive action of the tribesmen developed in four main areas. On the Mohmand and neighbouring Utman Khel border, lashkars (gatherings of tribesmen) collected ready to invade British territory at the first favourable opportunity, and though small parties only ever crossed the frontier, and no considerable invasion was attempted, the threat existed over a long period.

A more formidable danger matured on the Afridi front, as on two occasions the tribesmen crossed the frontier in more or less scattered bands but in considerable numbers and actually succeeded in reaching the outskirts of Peshawar City.

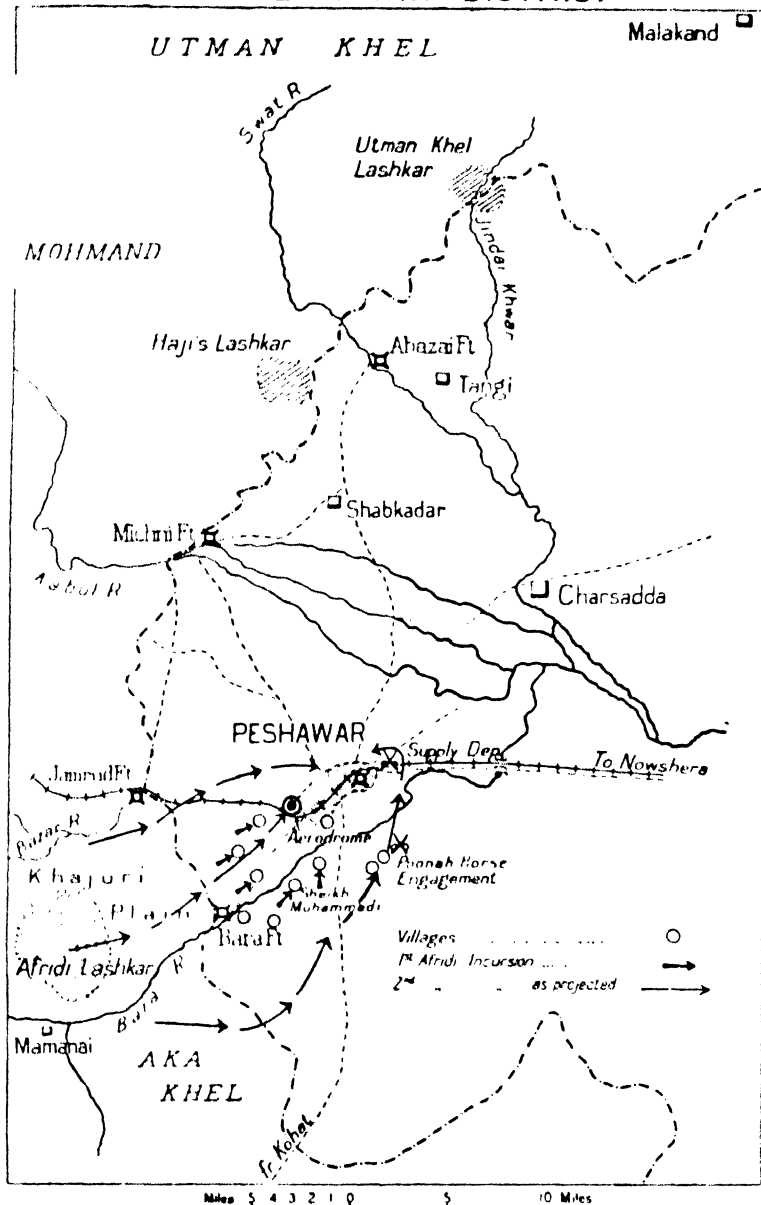
In the Kurram valley trouble also developed; posts held by irregulars were attacked, there was fighting between tribes friendly and those hostile to the Government, and there were also attempts of invasion by tribesmen from Afghan territory.

Lastly, in Waziristan certain sections of the tribes rose and attacked posts held by irregulars, necessitating the reinforcement of, and co-operative action by, the normal regular garrison.

Other outbreaks which were less serious in character



## THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT



but added to the task of the troops also occurred. The chief danger, however, lay in the possibility of simultaneous incursions from the Mohmand and Afridi areas maturing and combining with a serious internal rising.

The events in Waziristan and the Kurram will not be described, as they had much the same character as those which occur from time to time in these areas, though with decreasing frequency as the districts are brought into a more settled condition by military occupation. Civil administration in these districts had not been established, and except so far as the outbreaks which had to be dealt with synchronised with and arose from the same influences as caused unrest in British India, intensifying the danger of the situation and the magnitude of the tasks of the troops, they are outside the scope of this book.

The first serious threat developed on the Mohmand border where the Haji of Turangzai, a notorious anti-British fanatic and father-in-law of the arrested Red Shirt leader, Abdul Ghaffar, began to raise a lashkar, which was joined by parties of Mohmands. This lashkar, under the leadership of the Haji's son, Badshah Gul, assembled at the border by 6th May, some 700 strong. Here it halted, the inhabitants on the British side undertaking to provide it with food. As soon as the warning of the assembly of the lashkar was received, its movements were kept under observation by the Royal Air Force, but no offensive action was at first taken against it. It soon became apparent, however, that its presence on the frontier was having a bad political effect, and loyal sections of the Mohmands asked that something should be done.

An ultimatum warning the Haji to withdraw

elicited a defiant reply and in consequence the Royal Air Force was ordered to commence bombing attacks on 11th May. This marked the beginning of a period of operations by the Royal Air Force which continued on one part of the frontier or another up till the middle of September.

During these operations it was seldom either politically expedient or justifiable to adopt the usual tactics of bombing villages from which the hostile elements came. Under the prevailing conditions, the hostile bodies were often made up of men drawn from wide areas and from villages which contained many opposed to their conduct. Air attacks were in consequence generally directed against personnel alone, and such attacks lose their efficacy once the enemy has learnt to avoid loss by scattering, taking cover and moving by night. Under such conditions a combination of ground and air action becomes necessary to secure results and close co-operation between the Services is essential. For these reasons the air attack on the Haji's lashkar gave disappointing results, as the Government was unwilling to allow ground troops to cross the border. Excellent cover was obtainable in caves, and although in the search for cover the lashkar spread itself over an area of some two by eleven miles, it still remained in being, a potential threat encouraging the activities of the Red Shirts and general unrest in the Peshawar district. In consequence it was necessary to occupy a blockade line with irregulars and frontier constabulary, supported by two battalions and a battery of regular troops in order to prevent infiltration into British territory and to check the passage of supplies to the lashkar. This purely defensive policy on the ground, combined with the limitations imposed on the Royal

Air Force, was hardly likely to impress the Haji, so long as unrest in other areas gave him hope that his opportunity might come. His following tended to increase rather than diminish, rising at one time to over 2500 men. Moreover, he received encouragement from the fact that his neighbours the Utman Khel, towards the end of May, also produced a lashkar, which adopted much the same attitude as the Haji and was prepared to co-operate with him. So long as the Utman Khel lashkar remained in being, the Haji was unwilling to lose credit by leaving them in the lurch. It was not until sufficient information became available as regards the composition of the Haji's force that the Royal Air Force was able to employ its normal tactics and bomb villages that were deeply enough implicated to justify such action. This form of pressure, combined with the failure of action against the Government elsewhere, led finally to the dispersal of the Haji's following, but it cannot be said that he ever suffered an impressive defeat, and he remained a potential source of trouble.

Behind the troops holding the Haji in check, a series of combined military and police operations were carried out to deal with internal subversive action in its various forms of murder, acts of sabotage and drilling of Red Shirts. Towns and villages were surrounded and searched and arrests made. In certain cases towns were blockaded for some days, till the inhabitants adopted a penitent attitude; this, for instance, was done at Charsadda, a town which was a hotbed of sedition. In certain cases collisions with bodies of Red Shirts occurred, but generally the timely use of military assistance allowed the police to take effective action. Large numbers of troops were

required, however, and so long as the threat of tribal invasion remained there was a recurrence of seditious action whenever the troops were withdrawn.

The action of the Afridis took a more serious form. The attitude of the tribes in the Tirah was from the first a source of anxiety to the Government of India. In April the Government had intervened to impose a settlement of a dispute between the Shiah and Sunni sections of the Orakzai tribe, in which the Afridis had also been concerned. The Government award had favoured those of the Shiah sect, and the decision of the Government was unpopular, for the Afridis as well as the bulk of the Orakzais followed the Sunni form of Moslemism. Although compensation was paid by Government to the losers, little of it reached the younger and more restless elements in the tribes. The ground was in consequence well prepared to receive the anti-British propaganda of the Congress agents, in which were blended the ideas that the British attitude was hostile to Moslemism and that British control in India was passing. The younger men, encouraged by fanatical mullahs, eagerly listened and were ready to rebel against their maliks and take part in any anti-British enterprise.

During May, however, air reconnaissance revealed no large movements in the Tirah, although it was known that small lashkars had begun to collect near the frontier; and it was not till the end of the month that larger bodies were reported assembling in the Bazar and Bara valleys. On 1st June air reconnaissance observed movement eastward, and during the next two days the small bodies coalesced and the lashkar, marching openly in large bodies headed by men with red flags, could easily be seen from the air moving

down the Bara valley towards the Khajuri Plain. No ultimatum was issued nor was offensive air action taken, as the hostile intentions of the lashkar were still uncertain, but frontier defences were strengthened, regular troops relieving such posts as were held normally by tribal levies.

By 4th June the lashkar had reached the caves in the hills west of the Khajuri Plain and was now fully assembled some 3000 strong about twelve miles south-west of Peshawar and five miles south-west of Bara Fort. Up till the evening of that day there was no clear indication that hostile action was intended. It was given out that the purpose was to talk and to ascertain whether sympathy with the alleged sufferings of Congress followers was justified by facts. This may have been the attitude the more responsible men wished to take up; but it became clear that the majority believed that British rule was ended and the Government forces impotent. The fact that there had been no interference with their march on the previous days confirmed the belief and a favourable moment for a jihad appeared to them to have arrived.

As precautionary measures, during the day extra troops were drawn into Peshawar, including the cavalry brigade which had been assisting in the internal security measures in the districts adjoining the Mohmand border; the constabulary garrison of Bara Fort was also reinforced by a company of Gurkhas; while to show that the Government was not entirely impotent, a demonstration by thirty-two aircraft was carried out over the Khajuri Plain.

The demonstration did not produce the desired effect, and in the evening military intelligence established the hostile intentions of the lashkar and that an

attack on Peshawar was proposed. The Chief Commissioner (not, it will be noted, the military commander) directed the Royal Air Force immediately to commence bombing the lashkar, which had been previously warned that it had rendered itself liable to air attack.

The first flight of bombers left the aerodrome at 8.35 P.M., one and a half hours after the receipt of the intelligence information, and by midnight five other flights had delivered their bombs, the camps of the Afridis being clearly visible from the air. Bombing was then suspended.

In spite of this action some 1500 men of the more daring elements of the lashkar succeeded during the night in penetrating the picket line held by frontier constabulary. By dawn they were scattered in parties of 50 to 200 men in villages south and south-west of Peshawar, even penetrating to the gardens on the outskirts of the city.

The attack as planned had provided for an advance in two bodies, one north of the Bara road, to attack the cantonment and aerodrome, the other south of the road, direct against the fort and city. The failure of this plan was no doubt due to the confusion caused by the bombing, which may also have been the reason why the more nervous section of the lashkar never started, but awaited for a "success" message from the more adventurous. The parties which had advanced received a measure of assistance from some of the cis-frontier villages, in so far that supplies of food were forthcoming, telegraph wires were cut and some roads blocked. This was, however, much less than the Afridis expected, as they had counted on being joined by many local recruits and also on such action being

taken as would prevent aircraft from leaving the ground. To a considerable extent the Afridis' plans had miscarried, but from reports received in Peshawar in the early morning it was evident that a considerable operation would be required to evict the parties which had crossed the border.

In addition to the troops posted to meet any attack on the cantonment or city during the night, a mobile force, consisting approximately of one weak cavalry brigade and one infantry brigade (less one battalion), with two sections of armoured cars and some artillery, had been kept concentrated and available for offensive action. The degree to which the hostile parties were scattered, and the enclosed nature of the ground round the numerous villages, affording plenty of good cover, made the task by no means an easy one. It was decided that the operation should take the form of a cavalry drive from Bara towards Peshawar while the infantry brigade in two columns worked outwards from Peshawar and took up positions to act as stops; the right column between the Bara road and the Bara River and the left column on the Kohat road. The Royal Air Force meanwhile employed two army co-operation and two bombing squadrons during the day to attack any enemy personnel seen moving on the Khajuri Plain.

The cavalry brigade commenced its drive at 11.30 from Bara, moving on each side of the Bara River, with a section of armoured cars on the Bara road to protect the left flank. The right regiment soon encountered resistance at Sheikh Muhammadi village which held it up; mounted action was impossible and walls provided the enemy with cover. Even when the left regiment came across the river to attack the village



from the north, supported by artillery and infantry machine guns, the enemy were not dislodged, and the troops broke off the action and returned to cantonment in the evening. Patrols from the two infantry columns also encountered enemy parties during the day, both sides suffering casualties in indecisive skirmishes. The Royal Air Force in the evening located some 150 Afridis in a nullah about two miles from the aerodrome and by a rapid attack before they could disperse, inflicted damage.

On the whole, however, the Afridis, though brought to a standstill, sustained no heavy reverse and their parties succeeded in withdrawing across the Khajuri Plain under cover of darkness. On the 6th the troops found the Peshawar district clear of all large enemy parties and an ultimatum was delivered to the lashkar, still on the border, that their villages would be bombed if they did not immediately disperse. It was, however, considered politically inadvisable to give effect to this threat and on the 7th bombing of the cave area only was carried out, no very vulnerable targets being seen. Between the 7th and 11th the lashkar gradually dispersed, working home in small bodies by night.

The Afridis are believed to have lost thirty-three men killed during the course of their attempted invasion, but though the results may have been discouraging to them it cannot be claimed that they received a decisive lesson. The British attitude was essentially defensive and did not include any striking counter-offensive action.

There can be little doubt that if political considerations had permitted the Royal Air Force to attack the lashkar on its original march in masses to the border

the danger would not have matured. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the bombing carried out on the night of the 4th June was not premature. If the Afridis had advanced in large bodies, as they had intended, opportunity of inflicting a decisive defeat on them next day by combined ground and air action might have been presented. As it was, their dispersion in comparatively small bodies made it difficult for the troops to concentrate for counter-attack, or for the Royal Air Force and Army to co-operate effectively in dealing with the scattered bands.

The Afridi withdrawal was followed in the middle of June by the dispersal of the Utman Khel lashkar, due partly to the bombing of villages and partly to a ground operation directed against it. This again was followed at the end of the month by the withdrawal of the Haji's gathering, which had been gradually weakened by the bombing of the villages of some of its constituents, and was now under no moral obligation to remain in support of the Utman Khel.

The withdrawal of the three lashkars enabled troops to be employed with increased vigour in support of the police in re-establishing control in the more remote parts of the Peshawar district where Red Shirts were still active; many villages were surrounded by night and arrests made. In these operations troops were moved as far as possible by motor transport, but the work in the height of the hot weather and in rough country was very exhausting. During July there was some recrudescence of Utman Khel activities but the numbers concerned were not large. In this month trans-frontier unrest in acute form was chiefly confined to Waziristan and on the whole the situation was rather more in hand.

The Afridis, however, were not done with. During July they spent their time in recrimination over the failure of the attack on Peshawar, and dissensions between the extremists and more temperate elements of the tribes became increasingly marked, the more moderate men being excluded from many discussions at which the firebrands urged a renewal of the attempt on Peshawar. As a compromise, in the middle of July a deputation of the maliks and elders was sent to discuss "terms" with the political agent; but their demands, which included the release of political prisoners, were quite impossible and only showed how strong the influences of propaganda still were. The return of the deputation, having achieved nothing, left the game in the hands of the opposition.

On 1st August a large Jirga was held by representatives of all the sections of the Afridis and several of the Orakzai. None of the maliks were present, and the young men, having it all their own way, decided that a lashkar should be raised immediately for another attack on Peshawar.

By the 4th, 2500 men had assembled and commenced their movement down the valleys. They had learnt by experience how to evade air observation and this time they marched in small parties and by night. Consequently it was through the intelligence system that Peshawar received first information of the movement, although during the 5th and 6th air reconnaissance could follow it sufficiently to confirm ground reports.

The Afridi plan was to deploy on the border in three groups. Moving by the Bazar valley, the left group had the Peshawar Jail and the liberation of the prisoners as its objective. The centre, emerging on the

Khajuri Plain, intended to attack the cantonments and aerodrome. The right group, passing round the south of the city, aimed at capturing Peshawar Fort from the east. It was hoped also that a simultaneous attack would be made by the Orakzais on the Kohat district. The attack was timed to take place on the night 6th-7th August.

Continuous and very complete information was supplied by the military intelligence system concerning the composition and strength of the lashkar, which received accessions to its strength as it advanced till it numbered about 5000 by the time it arrived within striking distance. Due warning was given to the Afridis that in case of a hostile movement their villages were liable to be bombed, and as soon as the movement was known to have started a further warning was given to the villages in the Bara valley that they would be bombed if they allowed the hostile tribesmen to pass. Consequently, bombing of villages which the hostile bodies had reached was commenced at noon on the 6th and personnel targets were also engaged. On the same day the mobile force at Peshawar was moved into position to meet the coming attack. The 1st Cavalry Brigade, with one section of armoured cars, was placed to watch the frontier in conjunction with the Frontier Constabulary, approximately from Jamrud to Bara Fort inclusive, while an infantry brigade occupied a line about two miles south-west of Peshawar covering the road to Bara Fort.

The Afridi advance appears to have been delayed by twenty-four hours, and on the morning of the 7th cavalry patrols failed to make contact with any of the enemy. Intelligence reports indicated, however, that

large numbers had arrived on the western edges of the Khajuri and Aka Khel Plains and were lying up in the innumerable caves to be found there. The necessity of finding cover caused the lashkar to be widely dispersed and intercommunication and co-ordinated action consequently difficult. During the day air attack on the cave area and on the Bara villages was continued, but for political reasons no attempt was made to carry the attack to the more distant regions from which most of the personnel of the lashkar had come. After making their morning reconnaissance the cavalry withdrew during the day to cantonments, but moved out in the evening to their position of the previous night. The infantry brigade continued to occupy its position and an additional battalion was moved out to cover the south side of the gardens of the Peshawar cantonment, its left extending to the Kohat road.

Except for air action, which it was hoped would deter the enemy from hostile action, a defensive attitude was thus still maintained. But air action was not to prove a sufficient deterrent and the passive defensive measures could not prevent infiltration and outflanking movements.

At nightfall on the 7th the process of infiltration began and many groups of Afridis, totalling about 1000 men, crossed the border some five miles south-east of Bara Fort. One party engaged a constabulary post half a mile south of that fort, and another the battalion which had been posted on the extreme left near the Kohat road. In these collisions the enemy had no success, but other parties made progress round the left flank of both the cavalry and infantry positions.

By the morning of the 8th some parties had reached

the gardens on the southern outskirts of Peshawar, where they remained hidden with the connivance of local inhabitants. Cavalry reconnaissance failed to find any of the enemy in Khajuri Plain, but patrols located a party in a village beyond the left of their line which was engaged and driven out with the aid of Royal Horse Artillery and air bombing. In the evening the cavalry withdrew to cantonments, but the infantry brigade was moved forward to a line extending for four and a half miles to the south-east of Bara Fort. During the night a great deal of shooting went on and some pickets were attacked without much result. The battalion on the southern side of the city were also engaged and inflicted some casualties on their assailants. Reports indicated that though some of the more faint-hearted of the tribesmen had begun to dribble home, yet on the whole fresh accessions were adding to the strength of the lashkar on the border, across which parties continued to infiltrate.

During the 9th, in order to clear up the situation, cavalry reconnoitred the villages south of the Bara River. The 1st Cavalry Brigade, working in co-operation with a line of infantry stops south-west of Peshawar, located a small body of the enemy, but the ground was difficult and the enemy escaped after being shelled out of the nullahs where they had been taking cover. Farther east, however, the Poona Horse, having been sent to reconnoitre some villages south-east of Peshawar, came across more formidable forces. A sudden attack was made on the regiment by a large body of Afridis who had been hidden in nullahs, and the regiment, which was very weak in numbers, had some difficulty in extricating itself on difficult ground. The main result of this engagement

was to force the hands of the Afridis. Their position had been discovered and they probably realised that superior forces would soon be concentrated against them. The alternatives were to disperse or to embark on some impressive action at once. Instinctive reasoning and the excitement of action led them to adopt the latter course, and later in the afternoon they made a determined attack on the supply depot situated north-east of the city on the Peshawar-Nowshera road. This depot is a large walled enclosure with a perimeter of about two miles and its protection was provided by a guard of an Indian officer and fifty men of the 4/11th Sikhs. The Afridi attack succeeded in forcing an entrance at two places, but the small garrison was equal to the occasion. One party of the enemy which had forced the eastern gate was checked by the fire of one N.C.O. and three men who had taken up position on the roof of a building. Another party which broke through the northern wall were held up with loss by the fire of a Lewis gun brought against them. The officer, having telephoned for reinforcements, organised a counter-attack with the remainder of his men. While the counter-attack was in progress two armoured cars arrived and engaged the enemy outside the enclosure, driving off those at the eastern gate. Other cars soon followed and, with the garrison, cleared the actual depot area. Then more troops put in an appearance, cavalry regiments and infantry (one battalion coming from Bara in lorries), and were employed to sweep the ground north and south of the depot. Seven aeroplanes also attempted to co-operate but the proximity of the troops made it too dangerous to drop bombs. The enemy, seeing their opportunity had gone, made no attempt to continue the fight but

fled into the thick crops, losing men as they went. The enterprise altogether cost them at least thirty lives and the troops, surprisingly, suffered no casualties.

The attack on the depot coincided with some other less determined attempts to enter the city, which, however, showed the extent to which the enemy had worked round it. A train on its way to Nowshera was fired on and the fort was subjected to some sniping, though the latter was probably the work of disaffected elements in the city. Telegraph lines connecting Peshawar with India were cut and train service was temporarily suspended. As wireless communication was for a time interrupted by atmospherics on one day, Peshawar found itself completely isolated. Still, something tangible had been found to hit and a counter-offensive blow had been struck which proved to the enemy that their plan of campaign had failed.

On the 10th the troops continued counter-offensive operations against the scattered parties hiding in various places. Dawn reconnaissances failed to find any considerable groups, but eventually it became known that there were still a number in the woods and nullahs in the neighbourhood of the city. These were shelled and infantry were able to bring fire on parties disturbed by the artillery. The enclosed nature of the area, however, and standing crops made it a game of hide-and-seek favourable to the hiding side.

That night, although some sniping continued, the enemy withdrawal began in earnest. On the 11th the cavalry could find no sign of the enemy in a search east and south of the city, but the inhabitants were evidently helping such as still remained to avoid discovery by lighting fires to indicate the movement of troops.



The return of parties from their fruitless enterprise gave rise to dissension in the lashkar and there were hard words with those who had failed to follow them. Continued bombing of the caves and Bara villages added to the general discouragement, though hopes of co-operation by the Mohmands for the moment checked dispersal. Actually on the 12th the lashkar received a reinforcement of 1500 men. This was due to the arrival, four days late, of the column which under the original plan had intended to work down the Bazar valley and attack Peshawar from the north.

This column seems to have made no attempt to carry out its task and on learning the state of affairs immediately decided to return next day. A general drift homewards then set in.

By the 15th a few scattered parties were still reported to be in the Peshawar district searching for the bodies of their comrades, but the movement as a whole finally collapsed. It remained for the maliks in the Tirah to reassert their authority, now that their position was strengthened by the failure of those who had refused to listen to them, and by the fact that their own attitude had resulted in their most important areas being spared bombing. On the other side of the border the Government had to bring home to the local inhabitants that the assistance they had rendered to the invaders could not be passed over. In order to give local officers the requisite powers, martial law was declared on the 15th. Steps, which need not be detailed but in which troops played a chief part, were also taken to bring such economic pressure on the Tirah tribesmen as would cause a change of heart.

The Afridi enterprise, owing to its sensational

character, encouraged for the time being the belief that the hold of the Government had weakened, but its collapse, although unmarked by decisive encounters, soon brought about a reaction in the trans-border areas.

By the middle of September all danger of a general rising of the trans-frontier tribes had passed and internal unrest could be dealt with on more normal lines. Unrest remained, but it could no longer hope for support from outside.

A remarkable feature of the Afridi incursion was the total absence of looting, which gave it a unique character. In all previous enterprises of the tribesmen across the border loot has been the main objective; even when the incentive has been a desire to defy the Government of India, defiance has taken the form of proving its inability to protect its own subjects. On this occasion the object was clearly to combine with the subjects for the overthrow of British rule. Religious fanaticism, of course, served as a stimulant. The invaders in consequence had the great advantage of finding themselves in a friendly country, while at the same time it was difficult for the Government forces to determine how far the local inhabitants should be treated as definitely hostile; many of them were not, and merely failed to understand the tolerance of the Government towards the disaffected. One must admit that the inhabitants were in a difficult position; in the absence of Government protection, being themselves unarmed, they were in no position to resist demands of the tribesmen for food and shelter, while when fighting occurred they ran a considerable danger of being mistaken for the invaders. The tribesman when hard pressed could

drop his weapons and pose as a simple countryman.

The defensive attitude of the Government, however politically advisable, must have greatly increased the difficulty of the fighting Services in co-ordinating their action effectively. The air arm was to a very limited extent only, permitted to engage the targets on which it produces the most telling results, and instead of bombing villages which might have made the tribesmen see reason at an early stage, it was forced to engage personnel targets difficult to locate and yielding small results. It is not surprising that under the conditions air action alone failed to stop the forward movement of the tribesmen. That it did cause dispersion and considerable dislocation of their plans is clear, but this added to rather than reduced the difficulties of the ground troops and made less effective the assistance which the air could give them in locating and fixing the enemy. Once the enemy had spread itself in small parties in the closely inhabited area, the air could see little and was seldom able to use its weapons. From the air the Afridis, unless in considerable bodies, were indistinguishable from the villagers. It will be noted that when the enemy did collect in considerable numbers, he was discovered by the action of ground troops; this despite the fact that weather and conditions of terrain were most unfavourable to vigorous reconnaissance. The ground troops gained nothing from the dispersal of the enemy into small bands; on the contrary this entailed some of the difficult conditions of guerrilla warfare. A large proportion of the troops in the area was absorbed in furnishing guards for the protection of vulnerable points from both internal disturbances and the action

of small parties which might evade mobile troops. The number of troops which could be spared for mobile operations was thus limited and these had to be kept sufficiently concentrated to deal with any enemy located. To round up even a small party of the enemy required practically as many troops as would be needed to deal with a party of considerable size. The smaller the enemy party, the more mobile it became and the more easily could it practise concealment and evasion, while concentrations effected to round it up left other parties free from interference. Only when he was located in considerable numbers could an effective counter-stroke be made on the enemy.

In reviewing the whole episode of the Afridi incursion, the danger of a defensive policy when dealing with an uncivilised enemy is evident. Subsequent trouble can be directly traced to the neglect of the opportunity for taking effective air action against the Afridis in their first march. That both the Afridi enterprises were short-lived was due to dissensions among themselves, the absence of the incentive of loot and the unfamiliar nature of the terrain when it came to fighting, rather than to the action of Government forces. Troops committed to defensive operations could do little more than prevent the enemy achieving any striking success. Even in this the element of luck which led to the encounter between the Poona Horse and the principal party of the enemy must be recognised. If this party had been able to carry out its intention of making a surprise attack under cover of darkness it might well have gained a footing in the city and joined hands with the disaffected elements there. Such an occurrence would not only have

produced a very serious local situation, but news of it could hardly have failed to have a far-reaching effect. That the danger did not fully materialise is no reason for ignoring the risks of surrendering the initiative to the enemy.

Retention of control by the Chief Commissioner when the two fighting Services were engaged in war-like operations established a precedent which it is to be hoped will seldom be followed. It was presumably due to the close connection between external aggression and internal unrest. As an arrangement for the co-ordination of the efforts of the fighting Services it had nothing to commend it; certainly it did not produce true unity of control but rather direction of operations by a committee of three, of which the chairman, being a civilian, had to rely on the advice of the technical members. Such advice could hardly be tendered without bias in the absence of full responsibility for decision.

The system may not have led to serious failure; given good-will any system will work up to a certain point; but a system depending solely on good-will tends to produce ineffective compromises and delay in reaching decisions. The desire to avoid friction has its dangers when there is divided responsibility. In the execution of plans good-will and cordial co-operation cannot be over-valued, but in the formation of plans and in arriving at decisions they are a poor substitute for responsibility.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BURMESE REBELLION, 1930-32

REBELLION is perhaps too dignified a term to be applied to the armed disturbances which broke out in Burma in December 1930 and continued throughout 1931 well into 1932. The term implies a definite cause of discontent and a definite political objective which in this case are difficult to trace. Armed disturbances due to some local reasons for discontent or lawlessness are not uncommon in certain districts in Burma. Those we are considering differed not so much in form as in their widespread nature, scale and unexpectedness, which indicated a directing organisation.

When they first broke out the origin of the disturbances was very obscure, but it has become increasingly clear that they originated in a Nationalist movement which aimed at getting rid of British control by much the same non-violent methods as had been adopted by the Congress organisation in India. Armed rebellion was probably not contemplated by the Nationalist organisation, but certain of its members availed themselves of Nationalist propaganda and the natural tendencies and superstitions of the Burmese to develop armed insurrection under their own leadership. With the resulting disorder and loss of Government authority an opportunity was created for a widespread outbreak of banditry with little or no political significance, but rather a manifestation of the

natural instincts of the Burman when released from control. The obscure origin of the revolt added to the difficulty of determining the scale and nature of the measures required to suppress it.

At no time were the operations of a nature which required more than a military police force, and the sole reason for calling in the assistance of the Army was the numerical insufficiency of the police to deal with the number of disturbances which broke out simultaneously.

A larger police force could have nipped the insurrection in the bud, but as it was not at once checked the situation soon passed beyond what could be dealt with by the police even with the assistance of the troops normally stationed in Burma. Whether it is more economical for the civil authority to maintain a police force with a considerable margin in excess of what is required for controlling criminal activities under normal conditions, or whether a minimum police force should be maintained for normal circumstances and reliance be placed on the Army for assistance when the abnormal occurs, is an interesting problem. To employ the Army entails heavy expenditure, and the natural and unavoidable hesitations and delays in bringing it into operation may lead to a general worsening of the situation and the necessity of larger-scale measures. But the normal annual budget concerns financial authorities more than the possibility of expenditure to meet the abnormal, and the Army is always there to fall back on. We may therefore consider it more probable that the Army will from time to time be called on to carry out police operations than that the police forces of our various possessions should be materially increased. This

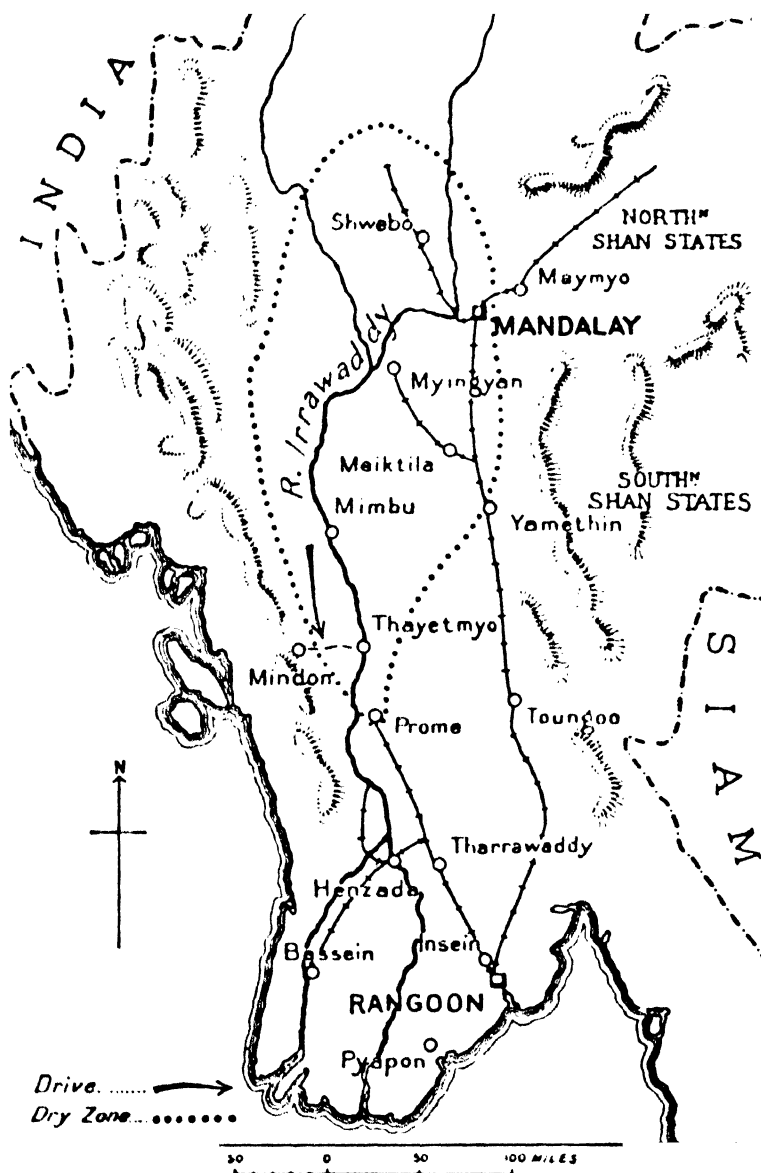
points to the advisability of the maintenance of close touch between the police forces and the Army—coordination of their intelligence systems and a knowledge of each other's characteristics and requirements. It would appear that the absence of such close co-operation was felt in Burma and it had to be considerably developed in the course of operations.

The necessity of unity of control when the Army is called in was again illustrated. When the military authority takes control of the situation its action will be hampered if the attempt is made to maintain the normal civil administration and channels of communication while purely military operations are in progress. The situation is complicated when, as it will be seen was the case in Burma, military assistance is gradually invoked and when parts only of the country are out of control. In the case of the Moplah rebellion the necessity of transferring control from the civil to the military authority was much more clearly marked, and it soon became apparent in that case that the military must be endowed with adequate powers. In Burma martial law was never proclaimed, and the consequent difficulties had to be met as far as possible by the development of a good mutual understanding between civil and military officers, involving concessions on both sides.

In following the course of events it is well to recognise that though troops did on occasions carry out operations of a definite military character they to a considerable extent merely constituted a temporary expansion of a numerically inadequate police force. For this reason, presumably, complete control of the policy to be pursued in suppressing the rebellion was not vested in the military authority, and the troops



# SKETCH MAP OF BURMA



were not given powers in extension of those possessed by the military police under ordinances brought into force in case of disturbance.

It will, I think, make it easier to follow the course of events, and to realise the problem the Government of Burma and the troops had to deal with, if a general account of the nature and spread of the rebellion is given before the measures taken to suppress it are described in any detail.

An outbreak which gave the signal for the insurrectionary movement to start occurred on 22nd December 1930. It took the form of attacks on villages on the borders of the Tharrawaddy and Insein districts by riotous mobs. Attacks were continued during the night and on the following days, resulting in the murder of a forest ranger and several village headmen. On the 23rd a partly armed mob of over 400 men met and was engaged by a small party of police, both sides suffering casualties. A railway station a few miles north of Tharrawaddy town was also attacked that night by a gang of 70 men and the telegraph instruments destroyed.

Tharrawaddy was a notoriously lawless district, but these events, which had been totally unexpected, indicated disorder on an exceptional scale, though they were not at once recognised as arising from an insurrectionary movement. No definite cause of the outbreak could be discovered and it was at first attributed as much to agitation against a capitation tax due to come into effect on 1st January as to Nationalist propaganda. In spite of the arrival of reinforcements of military police and troops, outrages continued and signs of an organised anti-Government movement

were soon discovered in the course of collisions. Many of the members of the gangs were found wearing a sort of blue uniform, and anti-Government proclamations were captured. By the end of December it was known that the leader at the back of the outbreak was one Saya San, a member of the Nationalist Party, and that he had been making his preparations for some months. He had promised the overthrow of Government control and guaranteed his followers invulnerability to bullets by a tattooing process, reviving an old Burmese superstition. How far Saya San had acted with the cognisance of his party was not so clear. He had undoubtedly made use of the political propaganda of the party and was assisted by some disaffected monks, but he did not receive the party's open support. Disturbances in Tharrawaddy spread almost simultaneously to the neighbouring districts of Insein, Pyapon and, somewhat later, to Henzada. In the initial encounters with the police and troops the insurgents, relying on the assurances of invulnerability, showed considerable boldness and in consequence suffered fairly heavy casualties. Except in the Tharrawaddy and Insein districts the rising was definitely checked, but in these districts the success of the Government forces merely led to a change of tactics on the part of the rebels. They soon began to avoid fighting and took refuge in the forests, from which, as opportunities occurred, they raided defenceless villages.

During the months of January and February conditions appeared to be gradually improving, and though outbreaks of sporadic nature continued to occur they were increasingly in the nature of dacoities carried out by small bands of bad characters each

with its independent leader or "Boh". Steps which had been taken to prevent the spread of the outbreak northwards had apparently been successful. There were indications, however, that the continued existence of bands which the Government forces had been unable to hunt down was encouraging the young men and bad characters in other districts to practise dacoity unconnected with any political movement. During this period, nevertheless, a considerable number of the less determined rebels surrendered, and on the whole there was reasonable cause for optimism.

As so often happens, the defections from the rebels were more than balanced by the knowledge the remainder had acquired by experience both as to what they could and could not accomplish. Loot became increasingly their objective, but systematic terrorisation of the more law-abiding people was exploited both with a view to obtaining information about the Government action and to prevent information of their own whereabouts being given.

To demonstrate the powerlessness of the Government, raids were directed against defenceless Government agents concerned with revenue collection and other administrative duties. This policy had a large measure of success, and confidence of the ability of the Government either to provide protection or to inflict punishment on the law-breakers dwindled.

Government chiefly feared that this failure of confidence would lead to extension of unrest to the more northern districts. In the month of May the recrudescence of trouble which began to be apparent towards the end of February became very marked and

showed that the fear was not unfounded. In that month lawlessness spread to the Thayetmyo and Prome districts, being particularly acute in the former, where the situation became completely out of hand. During the first fortnight in June in Thayetmyo alone sixty-five villages were raided, headmen's houses being attacked and revenue which they had collected looted.

Thayetmyo and Prome from this time onward became the most disturbed districts, though in many others cases of dacoity occurred. Increased anxiety was felt that the insurrection would extend farther north into districts north of Mandalay, and reinforcements consisting of troops from India which had now been called for were at first mainly employed to prevent this occurring.

June and July may be taken to mark the peak of rebel success and the Thayetmyo district as the northern limit of its extension on any considerable scale. Subsequent to that date the efforts of the Government were successful in checking the further spread of the rebellion, and the month of August marked the initiation of systematic measures to restore order and re-establish confidence in the power of the Government. Considerable success in restoring order in the more southern districts, Tharrawaddy especially, had already been achieved, but this had been more than counterbalanced by the deterioration of conditions in Thayetmyo and Prome. Restoration of normal conditions was to take a long time. In round numbers, it took six months for the conflagration to reach its height and a further nine months to extinguish it.

To turn back to the beginning of the insurrection,

what were the tasks presented to the Government forces? They may, I think, be summarised as:

- (a) The capture or destruction of rebel bands and their leaders.
- (b) The protection of administrative agents and law-abiding people.
- (c) The prevention of the extension of areas of disorder.
- (d) The restoration of confidence in the power of the Government.

If (a) could be successfully accomplished the solution of the other three problems would automatically follow. It is also evident that (d) would prove a powerful factor in accomplishing (a). On the other hand, (b) and (c) tended to handicap Government forces in accomplishing (a) and to produce dispersion of effort. Yet none of the tasks could be neglected and the problem was how to deal with them simultaneously with the forces available.

The great extent of the disturbed area and its nature added immensely to the difficulties of the problem. When the insurrection was at its height active lawlessness was occurring in more or less intense forms over a tract some 250 miles from north to south and 100 miles from east to west, whilst in addition precautionary measures to discourage further extension of disorder were required over a much wider field. The nature of the country—very wet, in the monsoon season almost impassable, extensive forests and jungles and ranges of hills—reduced the mobility of Government forces and provided many refuges for the rebel bands. Metalled roads were practically non-existent, country tracks in most cases

were impassable to army transport and country carts or pack transport only could be used.

The forces available to deal with the outbreak were also in the first instance very small. Normally the Government of Burma relied on:

(a) The ordinary civil police scattered throughout the country.

(b) A military police force of seven battalions maintained chiefly to police the mountainous frontier regions inhabited by primitive tribes. Two battalions only were retained, one at Mandalay and one at Rangoon, to assist in maintaining order at those centres and as a reserve to reinforce the civil police in dealing with serious cases of dacoity.

(c) The military garrison stationed in two groups, in the neighbourhood of Rangoon and Mandalay respectively, whose main function was to provide for the security of European interests and personnel and as a reserve for the maintenance of order at those centres. At Rangoon were one British ("The Buffs") and one Indian battalion (2/15th Punjab Regiment), while in the neighbourhood of Mandalay were one British battalion (Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry) and two battalions of the Burma Rifles (regular battalions of the Indian Army but recruited chiefly from the hillmen of the frontier districts). As the Burma military district had to provide a detachment for the convict settlement in the Andaman Islands, and as the security of Rangoon and Mandalay could not be neglected, by no means the whole military force was available to reinforce the military police in dealing with disturbances in country districts.

When the initial disturbances broke out in Tharrawaddy they were, as has been said, looked on purely

as a local affair of an unusually serious nature, and the immediate action taken was to despatch a force of military police (of whom twenty-five were mounted infantry) to the scene. The continuation and spread of the disturbance almost immediately showed that a larger force was necessary and the 2/15th Punjabis and the Buffs at Rangoon were called on to provide a company each, while in addition the 3/20th Burma Rifles was moved south from Maymyo (the military station near Mandalay).

These troops, who had all reached the scene by 28th January, were, as they arrived, sent out in small detachments to engage the rebels. On the 30th two detachments of the Punjabis had sharp encounters in which they inflicted casualties on the rebels, and on the 31st a party of the Burma Rifles succeeded in capturing the rebel headquarters and killed some of the rebel leaders. The police too had some successful engagements.

As a result of these operations the nature of the outbreak and the extent to which it had been organised was to a large extent revealed, while the rebels had learnt that their promised invulnerability could not be relied on and henceforth sought to avoid collisions with armed forces. The forest areas gave them ample opportunities of concealment, and though the Tharrawaddy and Insein districts were combed out few bands were located. The troops and police were consequently driven to the defensive course of establishing a cordon on the edge of the forest to check the sporadic attempts made by the rebels to carry out raids. In spite of an increase in the police force, rebel activities could not be entirely controlled, but there was a certain lull which encouraged hopes that the



insurrection was dying out, especially as an outbreak in the Pyapon district had been crushed in an encounter in which the police fought a poorly armed mob throughout one day, inflicting heavy casualties.

By the middle of February the first phase of the rebellion may be said to have ended and the Government measures had met with considerable success. Casualties had been inflicted on the rebels, who had lost several of their leaders. Isolated outbreaks outside the Tharrawaddy district had been sharply suppressed and the extension of the outbreak to the north, which the Government especially feared, had apparently been prevented by the moral effect of detachments sent at an early stage to certain points on the railway to Prome. Conditions in the Tharrawaddy district were, however, not so satisfactory, as the rebels were "in being" and frequently active in spite of the police cordon.

Still, the conditions were sufficiently improved to permit the return of the Burma Rifles to their own station, and the situation was left mainly in the hands of the police.

Looking back one can, I think, recognise that deceptive period of lull, so often a feature in guerrilla warfare, during which, after early reverses, the rebels shed some of their less determined supporters, and occupy themselves with finding new leaders and devising new tactics based on lessons they have learnt. The defensive policy adopted by the Government forces left the initiative in the hands of the rebels and gave them a respite to mature their plans.

In the light of after events and on general principles it is interesting to speculate whether a more offensive policy could have been adopted, using troops to assist

the police in maintaining pressure on the rebels. The combing of the forest areas had produced little apparent result, and it is easy to understand that hunting scattered parties might appear a hopeless task and waste of effort. At the same time, one must always look at things from the enemy's point of view as well as one's own. Rebel bands that are constantly hunted, even if they successfully evade capture, can have little sense of security. They must always have the fear that their hiding-places will be betrayed, and to avoid surprise they must be continuously informed of the movements of Government forces. Generally speaking, they will be concerned with their own safety and have little opportunity of maturing their own plans. The moral effect both on them and on the neutral sections of the population is considerable. The neutrals fear they will come under suspicion and will be the more ready to assist the Government with information; for the tendency of the neutral is to seek to conciliate the side which has the initiative. In this case there must have been a natural unwillingness for the civil authorities to engage troops in apparently fruitless operations making heavy demands on them; and one can see that there would be an inclination to keep demands on the Army to an absolute minimum so long as there was a reasonable chance of the police force proving sufficient.

As a matter of principle, however, the danger of relaxing efforts too soon, before rebellion is thoroughly stamped out, must be recognised. Whether the defensive attitude of the Government was responsible for it or not, there was an undoubted recrudescence of the rebel activities beginning towards the end of February in Tharrawaddy and also, sporadically, in other

districts. Some of the outbreaks were probably merely due to the instinct of the Burman to resort to dacoity when the possibility of doing so successfully is demonstrated to him.

Assistance of troops again became necessary in Tharrawaddy, and the attempt to shut in the rebels by a police cordon was abandoned. Instead, the district was divided into a number of small areas of about fifty square miles, each with its own police detachment under a British officer. This system was still essentially defensive and left the initiative with the rebels, although it facilitated rapid counter-offensive action when raiders appeared. It did not lend itself, however, to combined offensive action on a considerable scale, and involved dispersion. Up to a point the new system was successful, inasmuch that conditions in the original disturbed areas improved towards the end of April in spite of the fact that the recrudescence of the rebellion had been accompanied by the intensification of political anti-Government activities which the discontent due to the fall in the price of paddy had made more than ever dangerous. In February, to combat the propaganda, various political societies were declared illegal and the troops in the district were reinforced by recalling the 3/20th Rifles from Maymyo.

An improvement of the outlook in April was short-lived and, as has been already recorded, May saw a rapid deterioration of the situation and the spread of the rebellion northwards into the Thayetmyo district. Anxiety lest it should spread still farther north became intensified. In consequence it was decided to draw on India for reinforcements. At first one battalion only was called for, but a few days later the

12th (Secunderabad) Brigade was also ordered to Burma and commenced its move on 27th May, and in all six battalions were finally supplied from India. The advisability of imposing martial law in the disaffected areas was at the same period discussed, but on the advice of the G.O.C. Burma District, who did not consider he had sufficient troops to make martial law effective, especially in the wet season which had set in, decision was postponed till after the rains. Ultimately it was decided to continue to employ the troops merely in aid of the civil power.

When reinforcements began to arrive in June they were employed in part to reinforce the Rangoon area, which included the actively disturbed districts. The remainder were sent north to prevent a further extension of the rebellion, particularly in the important districts north of Mandalay. Two brigade areas were formed with a dividing line running east and west about half-way between Rangoon and Mandalay. Each brigade had eventually five battalions and a varying force of police at its disposal, while District Headquarters at Maymyo retained two battalions under its own orders. Even with the additional force now available the nature of the country made the rounding-up of the rebels, so long as they were determined, a most difficult task, and during the rainy season practically impossible. The experiment of offering an amnesty to all except leaders and participants in serious outrages was tried, the conditions being that the rebels should return to their houses and assist the Government with information. The amnesty had some effect, but though it tended to reduce the size of rebel bands it rendered the remainder more determined and more elusive.

It now became necessary to frame a definite policy for the future employment of the troops available. The civil authorities inclined to demand their dispersal in a number of permanent posts. In disturbed districts these posts would, it was thought, be able to provide a measure of protection and to counter-attack such bands as appeared in their neighbourhood. In districts not actively disturbed, the posts by showing the flag would, it was hoped, prevent outbreaks. During the rainy season, and in certain districts where the difficulty of the country prohibited extensive operations, this dispersion of force was probably unavoidable. On the other hand, the employment of large numbers merely to show the flag in undisturbed districts was clearly a waste of power. Every soldier knows, too, that the more permanent posts become, the more will be the tendency to divert personnel from active employment to routine and maintenance duties. Troops, like other people, naturally desire to improve the amenities of their surroundings. The system was entirely unsuitable to a district where, as in Thayetmyo, the conditions had passed completely out of civil control and active steps for the restoration of order were necessary.

Military opinion demanded a more aggressive policy, entailing the reduction of permanent defensive posts to a minimum and formation of mobile forces of sufficient size to conduct systematised and co-ordinated offensive operations on a definite plan and with a definite object. The great extent of the area affected and the number of troops available made it impossible to apply this policy everywhere. The natural result was that both systems, which might be termed the "area system" and the "drive system" respectively,

were eventually employed. In the less disturbed areas where the situation was not entirely out of control of the civil power, the area system which was already in operation was continued, while the districts of Thayetmyo and Prome, where control had been entirely lost, became the scene of more extensive military operations in the nature of drives. It is proposed to follow only the course of these latter operations, but it should be remembered that in other districts pressure was maintained on the rebels by offensive operations adapted to the particular circumstances.

The first step towards initiating a co-ordinated offensive was to concentrate a sufficient force for the purpose. This was possible in the northern (12th Brigade) area. It will be remembered that troops in this area had in the first instance been widely dispersed in detachments with a view to preventing outbreaks in districts which were actually not actively disturbed. It soon became evident to the brigadier that this dispersion was a waste of power, as the civil administration was able to exercise effective control, and that a concentration towards his southern boundary would achieve the double object of preventing rebel bands working north from Thayetmyo to spread disturbances, and of providing a force with which to take offensive action.

This new policy was initiated in July and by the end of that month the more northern detachments had been withdrawn and troops were disposed towards the southern boundary of the brigade area, forming a barrier against incursions from the south.

When it became clear that these dispositions would give the 12th Brigade a considerable offensive force it

was decided to use it to restore order in the Thayetmyo district, and brigade boundaries were in consequence adjusted so as to place that district in the northern area as from 1st August. At the same time the brigade was relieved of responsibility for districts north of Mandalay by Burma District Headquarters, whose reserve, consisting of two battalions (one British and one Pioneer battalion), was available to support the civil power. The 12th Brigade still remained responsible for a large area not actively disturbed but where disturbance might break out, including the city of Mandalay itself, always a danger spot. In addition it now included the Thayetmyo district, most of which was completely out of control.

The task of the brigade was threefold:

1. To maintain satisfactory conditions where they existed.
2. To prevent incursions from the disturbed area.
3. To stamp out the rebellion in Thayetmyo and to restore the confidence of the law-abiding portion of the population there in order to induce it to co-operate by providing information and denying shelter to the rebels.

The first task entailed maintaining a limited number of detachments of varying strength to deal with minor disturbances in support of the police. These detachments were, however, reduced to a minimum in number and strength as they could be reinforced if necessity arose. The second indicated that the Thayetmyo district should be dealt with by an advance from north to south, supported by posts in order to maintain a barrier to prevent rebel parties breaking north through advancing columns. The

third entailed a thorough and continuously maintained combing-out of the district by mobile columns.

The brigadier began by dividing his area into six military districts, each with a commandant responsible for maintaining touch with the civil authority and for organising an intelligence service, including reconnaissance, operational and administrative. No military action was to be undertaken without the cognisance of the civil authorities, and the latter were requested to inform the military commandant of projected police operations.

Of the six military districts, five were looked on as "undisturbed" and in them the military garrisons were reduced to a minimum. A battalion was necessary in Mandalay military district, but in two of the "undisturbed" districts the strength of a company was considered sufficient. In the sixth military district, Thayetmyo West, a mobile striking force of the strength of about two battalions was concentrated in addition to six platoons to garrison three permanent posts.

Thayetmyo is divided in two by the Irrawaddy. The eastern half was practically undisturbed and it was in the western half that the projected offensive operations were to take place. One battalion in the eastern half was available to co-operate by preventing parties escaping in that direction, and it could also reinforce the offensive west of the river when necessary.

Western Thayetmyo was itself again divided into northern and southern areas each possessing distinctive natural characteristics, the dividing line being the east-to-west road from Thayetmyo to Mindon. The dry area of Burma extends as far south as this



road and consequently operations could be commenced at an earlier date in the northern than in the southern portion of the district; the latter portion was, moreover, very difficult country broken by hills, forest-covered and practically roadless. Operations in the area were therefore planned to be conducted in two stages. First, to re-establish order in the northern half by a deliberate advance from north to south, driving such enemies as were not captured into the confined and inhospitable region of the south, thereby incidentally reducing the chance of bands breaking north into undisturbed areas. After the northern half of the area had been cleared it was intended to deploy troops on new alignment from north to south along the western side of the southern area, which would then be combed through from west to east, driving the enemy towards the Irrawaddy, where patrol boats and the garrison of eastern Thayetmyo would be on the look-out. Posts on the Mindon road would check any tendency to break north.

In pursuance of this general plan preparations began in August for the clearance of the northern half of the district. Posts and supply depots were established at several points on the Mindon road and also on the starting-line of the drive, which was on another road running roughly east and west about thirty-five miles farther north. During the preparatory period the garrisons of these posts were ordered to be active in restoring order in their immediate vicinity. As a result of this latter order one of the most effective coups of the whole operation was carried out by the garrison of Thayetmyo town in this period; a rebel stronghold which had existed for many months undetected within four miles of the town being located

and captured. Incidentally this illustrates how defective the service of information had previously been, as Government forces had been in occupation of the town from the beginning of the rebellion.

By 10th September all was ready for the mobile columns, which were to carry out the work of clearing the area, to move to their starting points. Three columns had been formed, one stationed at Thayetmyo town, at the south-east corner of the area, as a reserve for use according to circumstance, while the other two carried out the drive, the axes of their advance being provided by two tracks running north and south. As these tracks were separated by a line of rough hills, making inter-communication difficult, the columns worked independently, but each was organised for subdivision into small parties. As no serious fighting was anticipated, and as mobility in the face of great transport difficulties was the main consideration, the total strength of each column was kept as low as possible. The nucleus of the columns consisted in one case of two, and in the other of three, platoons of Indian infantry to which were added detachments of Sappers and Miners, Signals, Field Ambulance and Transport. Parties of mounted police also were attached.

The object of the drive being to impress the inhabitants and to give a sense of insecurity to the law-breakers, it was intended to visit every village and search it for arms and wanted men. This entailed a deliberate advance by bounds, with a halt on each bound to enable each successive tract to be dealt with thoroughly. Visits as a rule were carried out by day and the inhabitants generally welcomed the troops. In certain cases night raids were carried out, and

frequently villages were revisited unexpectedly in order to show that the first visit was no mere temporary spasm of Government activity. An essential factor in carrying out the plan was the establishment of supply depots in advance, providing bases which gave the troops liberty of movement at the end of each bound, freeing them from cumbrous transport.

The whole operation occupied a month and entailed great and continuous activity under trying conditions of heat, rain, and mud. It was, however, completely successful in re-establishing peaceful conditions and civil control. No organised bands of rebels were encountered, but large quantities of arms, chiefly *dahs* and spears, were collected and many arrests of bad characters were made.

After the troops had been given a short period of rest the work of clearing the southern and more difficult area was undertaken. In this area there were known to be several small rebel bands, although there was no definite information as to their location. Procedure had to be modified on account of the nature of the country, which did not lend itself to a definite drive to the extent originally contemplated though the basic idea was retained.

Operations fell into two phases. In the first the task was to re-establish control over the more accessible and orderly portions of the district in order to shepherd the bandits into a restricted area and to improve the chances of obtaining information of their whereabouts. In the second phase a vigorous hunt for the bandits was carried out, together with a continuation of the work of the first phase. The general idea of forming a barrier to the escape of the rebels to the west and the principle of intense mobility were main-

tained. To carry out this plan two main forces were formed: the "Sab Force", located in the north-west portion of the area, consisting of eight platoons, and the "Gyo Force", in the south-west, of five platoons. A third force of one platoon was stationed in the south-east which could co-operate with the Gyo Force. There also remained some five platoons at Thayetmyo town and other posts in the north-east. All troops having been established at their new starting points, zero for the first phase was fixed for 21st October and the phase continued for four days. The duration of the phase was governed by the number of days' rations which could be carried without rendering columns cumbersome.

Operations in the first phase resulted in a number of small columns working each in its own clearly defined orbit, so that a large tract was dealt with simultaneously in which practically all villages were visited, arms collected, etc. The effect of such simultaneous action naturally increased the impression of the power and omnipresence of the Government forces.

No rebels were actually met with, but a certain amount of information for the second phase was gathered as regards their whereabouts, haunts and the names of their leaders. The gangs were known to be very small, in some cases only about half a dozen men, and clearly the business of rounding them up in the hilly jungle-covered country intersected by ravines would be like looking for the proverbial needle. To surprise and capture them, unless accurate and promptly transmitted information could be obtained, was almost out of the question, and the machinery for obtaining such information was defec-

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tive. Such reports as did come in were made normally to subordinate civil officials who, in the absence of martial law, were not under military control and were, moreover, attempting to carry on their ordinary civil duties. Absorbed in these duties and not realising what information the troops really required, or that to be of value it must be thoroughly sifted and transmitted rapidly, they proved inefficient intermediaries. Informants were not thoroughly cross-examined; hearsay information was not checked and it reached the military authorities by circuitous channels. The natural result was that the efforts of the troops were often wrongly directed.

Under these circumstances it is all the more notable that the indirect effect of pressure continuously and energetically applied did produce results. On the one hand, the continued activity of the troops restored the confidence of peaceful villagers, who denied supplies, and even offered active resistance, to the bandits. Constant visits by troops and cross-examination became a nuisance, to escape which villagers in their own interest began to take an active part in exterminating the cause. On the other hand, the life of the bandit was not happy. He was constantly on the run and in increasing fear of being betrayed. He had fewer opportunities of bringing off successful exploits on which banditry thrives. An adventurous life loses its attractions when it only implies constant insecurity.

It is easy for troops to become daunted by the lack of tangible results to their efforts, and it is all the more important that their leaders should realise that apparently fruitless exertions are not altogether wasted if the plan leaves the enemy no respite.

Phase two was initiated on 28th October, troops

having moved into positions from which the difficult central area of Mando, which had so far been left untouched, could be thoroughly searched. Part of one rebel gang, impressed by the threatened danger, surrendered immediately, and their leader, though he escaped capture when his hiding-place was searched, gave himself up the following day. This man's surrender was important as, in the early days of the rebellion, he had exercised great influence and was known as the King in Mindon. The headquarters of a second gang was located and attacked, but with the exception of one man the party escaped when their sentries gave the alarm. This gang was to lead the troops a prolonged dance, chiefly as the result of inaccurate information which diverted them into wrong directions. Its leader did not surrender to the police till 18th December, though his following by then had by degrees dwindled.

Other gangs either surrendered or disappeared during the progress of phase two, which lasted in intensive form for a little over a fortnight. On its conclusion, although a certain number of troops were still required to support the civil authorities, control had been restored and a fresh concentration of troops could be carried out to deal with the Prome district where there had been a recrudescence of rebel activities and which was transferred to the northern brigade area from 1st November. The trouble in Prome was confined to that portion of the district east of the Irrawaddy, but it had also spread into the eastern half of the Thayetmyo district, and before Prome could be dealt with the latter trouble had first to be suppressed. Subsequent operations need not be followed in detail. The general intention was to clear



the country from north to south, driving such rebels as could not be accounted for into the mountainous forest regions on its eastern side. It was found impossible to adhere strictly to this plan, but the principle of an active offensive to give the rebels no respite was followed. This, combined with an offer of an amnesty, led to the break-up of the rebels, and by the middle of February conditions had been sufficiently restored to the normal to justify the return of the 12th Brigade to India.

Although the 12th Brigade had had the task of finally clearing the Prome district, much effective work had previously been carried out by detachments working under the Rangoon Brigade. This brigade, in the earlier phases of the rebellion, was to a less extent than the 12th Brigade responsible for operations, and constituted rather a source from which troops were supplied to assist in carrying out police plans. Moreover, from the middle of March till the beginning of June, it was without a permanent commander in the absence on leave of the brigadier, whose term of appointment had expired.

The new brigadier arrived at a time when the Army had begun to play a more leading part. On the whole, however, owing to the fact that the Rangoon area lay entirely in the wet region of Burma and was, on account of forest and hills, especially difficult country, there was little scope for co-ordinated operations. Improvement in the intelligence service and insistence on a high standard of enterprise and activity on the part of detachments were the main directions in which the influence of the brigade could make itself felt. As an example of the type of operations carried out, the following may be given. A "Boh" named San Htu

had been particularly active in the Prome district and had organised three bands named respectively the "Tiger", "Rat" and "Lion" armies. His raids had been marked by special brutality and he had been successful in collecting some 20,000 rupees. After several successful encounters detachments of the 2/5th Mahratta Light Infantry and police located the headquarters of the "Tiger" army in a Buddhist monastery, and by a difficult night march surrounded it on 24th October. Fifteen rebels, including their leaders, were killed and sixteen others captured, none of the gang escaping. One British officer and three Sepoys were wounded in the encounter, which was perhaps the sharpest and most decisive in the whole rebellion. San Htu himself had been wounded in a raid made on his camp in the previous month by a party of the same regiment, so that good progress had been made towards breaking up the bands before the 12th Brigade took over the area.

In other districts, too, there were encounters from time to time as rebels became active, but it is impossible to give any connected account of the number of minor incidents which occurred, and went on recurring for months after the reinforcements from India had been withdrawn.

It may be asked what had become of Saya San, the original instigator of the rebellion, all this time. He had come to an untimely end. From Tharrawaddy, after the initial outbreak, he had gone to other districts in Lower Burma stirring up trouble. Thence he embarked on a new venture and made his way north-east into the Shan States of the Eastern border where he succeeded in bringing about a rising; but prompt and vigorous action by the police crushed it, and Saya

San himself was hunted down and captured in July 1931. In due course he was hanged, an event which contributed largely to re-establishing the prestige of the Government.

During all these operations the essential feature was the continuous exercise of pressure of small columns endowed with a high degree of mobility. Transport sufficient to make columns self-contained for several days without making them cumbrous was essential, but the absence of good roads made its provision difficult. In the lower country during the dry weather the country tracks connecting villages could be used by bullock-drawn country carts, but no other form of wheeled transport could be employed. In more difficult country wheeled transport of any sort was out of the question as only footpaths existed. Carriers were used to some extent, but the Burman is a thoroughly inefficient porter. Elephants proved much the best solution as they could maintain the pace of the column, and a single elephant carried enough to make a platoon self-supporting for five days.

To assist troops in searching the jungle a certain number of small parties of native levies were formed and named after packs of hounds. In some instances they justified their names and hunted well, but they required a good huntsman to control and stimulate their energies. The general plan for their utilisation was to employ small parties of troops to act as a line of beaters in order to flush or discover signs of the game. Then the pack would be laid on, with orders to pursue without intermission, a task for which troops in the dense jungle were less suitable.

Burma has been described as a continuous military

obstacle, and operations there have always tended to degenerate into the pursuit of elusive bands of dacoits. There has consequently been a temptation to abandon pursuit and to adopt a defensive policy involving the dispersion of force in small detachments waiting for the enemy to appear. Civilian authorities who have not been indoctrinated with a belief in the moral effect of continuous offensive pressure are especially prone to adopt this policy of dispersion. Absence of a well-defined objective and the apparently fruitless waste of energy appear to them good arguments against following an offensive course. That activity co-ordinated on a definite plan does produce results, even though they are often indirect, has, I hope, been shown. Results will, of course, be obtained more quickly if the forces available are sufficient to deal with several areas simultaneously, but when this is impossible the temptation to "hop about" in order to suppress the trouble where it is at the moment most acute has to be resisted, as it is detrimental to systematic action and a comprehensive plan.

Information proved most difficult to obtain throughout the operations, partly, no doubt, due to the nature of the country and of the enemy, but chiefly owing to the extent peaceful inhabitants were terrorised by the dacoits, and the resulting loss of confidence in the power of the Government. The difficulty was, however, accentuated by the duplication of control. Such information as was received came first to the civil native subordinates who were not acting directly under the military authority responsible for taking action. They had, naturally, very little idea of the importance of the information or of what points should be brought out in cross-examination of in-

formers. Special agents or spies do not appear to have been employed to any great extent, and there was a general lack of organisation in the intelligence system. It is evident that an intelligence system, to be effective, should operate under the authority which has to take action, and this affords a strong argument for the establishment of unity of control by the proclamation of martial law.

The original decision not to proclaim martial law is understandable when there were few troops available and when they were scattered in small detachments assisting the police. The civil authorities were provided with special powers and were in charge of the general exercise of measures to restore order. It is not so easy to understand why, when reinforcements had arrived and the conduct of operations devolved to a much greater extent on to the Army, martial law was not utilised in order to place undivided control on the hands of the military commander. Martial law does not necessarily imply the suspension of normal civil administration. In fact, it is the duty of the military authority to aim continually at the re-establishment of normal conditions as and when it is possible during the course of operations. On the other hand, it is of great assistance to the military authority to be able to employ directly, and to give orders to, the personnel of the civil administration. A system which depends on co-operation between two separate organisations, however loyal such co-operation is, can never be entirely satisfactory.

Military operations were conducted quite as much with a view to reassuring the well-disposed inhabitants as to capture and destroy the ill-disposed. One might have expected that the ordinary procedure of re-

establishing civil administration as confidence was restored would have been followed in order to liberate troops for active work. At one period, however, the policy of handing over considerable areas *en bloc* to the civil power was adopted, which entailed the retention of troops unnecessarily in pacified areas. Here again, dual control has unsatisfactory results, for differences of opinion as to the degree of pacification that had been achieved may arise. The apparent departure from the principle of unity of control was probably due to the essentially police nature of the measures to restore order and the absence of serious fighting. Although in a sense armed rebellion existed, yet one can hardly say that the suppression of it ever entailed guerrilla warfare to anything like the same degree as, for instance, in the Moplah rebellion. Except in the very early phases the rebels never attempted to attack the Government forces, but coupled evasion with robbery and murder of defenceless Government agents and peaceful inhabitants. It is truer to say that troops were used to supplement the police force than that they acted in aid of or in reinforcement of a police force incapable of dealing with resistance, and it was merely the widespread nature of the disturbances which required a larger force than the civil government controlled. Perhaps it was hardly realised that the Army organisation, with its means of communication and highly developed system of command, was capable of working on a larger scale co-ordinated plan than a police force.

The results obtainable by continuous active offensive in pursuit of a definite plan, even in the absence of clearly defined objectives, have already been pointed out.

To a very unusual degree the troops were concerned with restoring confidence among the peaceful inhabitants quite as much by systematically establishing contact with them as by destroying the forces of disorder. It may be questioned whether this was a task for the Army, whose primary business is fighting. The answer, of course, is that the Army should neglect no method by which it can attain its objective; in this case the restoration of normal conditions of law and order. To take a narrow view of the Army's duties and potentialities not infrequently results in its being called on too late and released at too early a stage when the civil power is in difficulties.

It is interesting to note that in the course of the operations British as well as Indian troops were used in mobile columns, and that they stood the conditions as well as the latter and were quite as effective. The moral effect on natives of showing British troops was very good and the men got much useful training. On the other hand, British troops were not as well suited as Indian for garrisons of posts where conditions were uncomfortable and where boredom was inevitable. The British soldier thrives on active employment and excitement; and boredom is his worst enemy.

## CHAPTER XII

### CYPRUS, 1931

THE disturbances, almost amounting to rebellion, which broke out in Cyprus in October 1931 gave an unexpected shock to the British public. So far as the general public was aware the Cypriots were believed to be reasonably content with the benefits they had received by transfer from Turkish to British rule. Knowledge of the fact that for the fifty-odd years since the date of the transfer an agitation had existed in the Island for union with Greece hardly extended beyond Government offices, and in them the demand was not taken very seriously. When the agitation became of recent years more insistent and better organised, as it had still no clearly defined programme of action, and as the attitude of the Greek Government was quite correct, perhaps undue licence was allowed to the orators and writers who sought to stimulate national sentiment. There was a tendency to treat the agitation as a useful safety-valve serving to divert from opposition to expensive Government schemes for the development of the Island a people whose wants were simple.

In 1931, however, Cyprus began to feel the effects of world financial depression, and extra taxation became necessary as the fall in commodity prices had reduced the yield of import duties. A final announcement too, that the accumulated surplus from the payments made from Cyprus revenue towards the



tribute formerly paid to Turkey would be employed for purposes which did not benefit the Island was equally unpopular, and these two grievances brought agitation to a head.

As the history and topographical conditions of the Island are possibly unfamiliar to most readers, let us pause here to examine what historical and ethnological basis exists for the agitation and the setting in which it developed.

The racial origin of the true Cypriots is mixed and somewhat obscure. They certainly are not sprung from the same stock as the inhabitants of Greece, although Greek is their language, and they have at all times been influenced by Greek culture. A considerable number of true Greeks are, however, settled in the Island and occupy important positions either commercially, especially in the seaports, or among the professional classes. Except as part of the Roman and Byzantine Empires, no direct political ties have ever existed between the Island and Greece, though, of course, it figured largely in Greek mythology. In fact affinity with Greece rests much more on linguistic and religious ties than on any historical or political connection. Few peoples can have experienced greater variety of foreign rule, as the Island has fallen under the control of the Powers which successively have exercised domination in the Eastern Mediterranean. For a time, as a result of the Crusades, independence was achieved, though under a foreign dynasty, and the Island secured an important position in what proved to be its golden age. Curiously enough England played a part in this development, as it was Richard Cœur de Lion who, in 1191, captured Cyprus shortly after it had broken adrift from the Byzantine Empire, and handed it

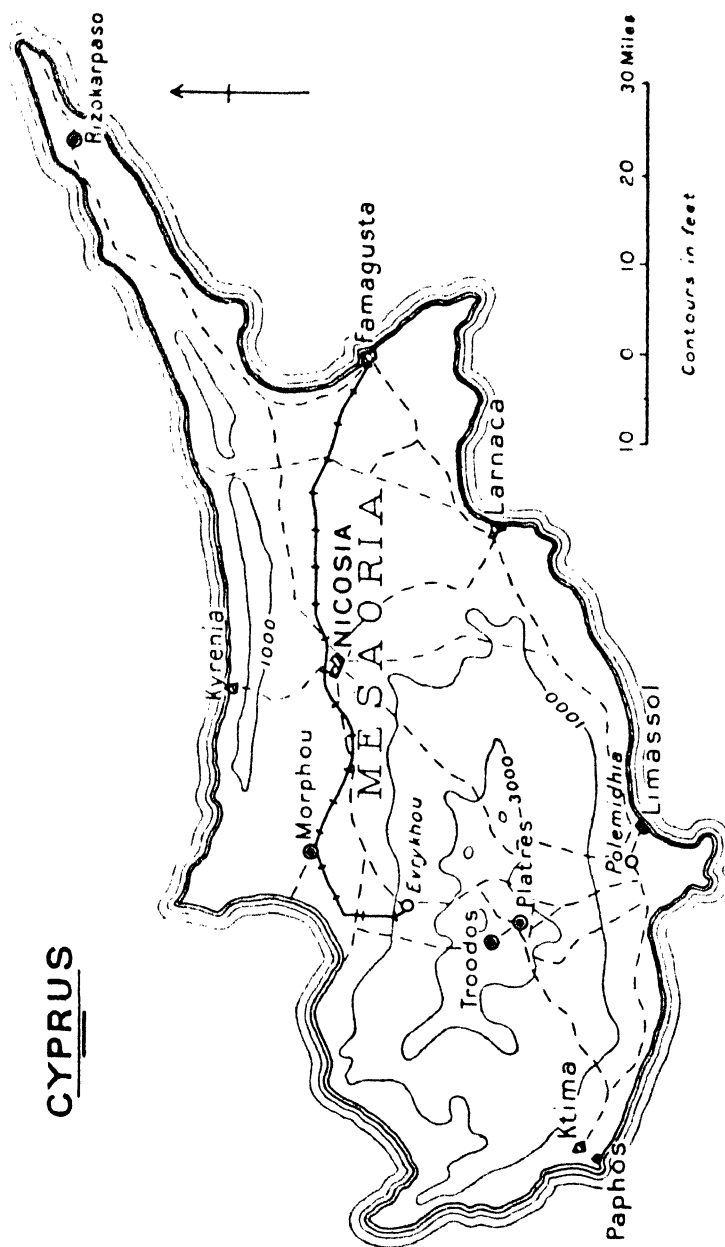
over to the Templars. They in turn transferred it to Guy de Lusignan, King of Jerusalem, and the Lusignan Dynasty governed the Island till it was captured by the Venetians in 1489 to provide a convenient base in their conflict with the Turks. During the Crusades and under the Lusignans the Island prospered greatly. It seems to have played the part of the Mount Nelson Hotel at Capetown during the South African War; a convenient and safe resort for the Crusaders' ladies, not too far off for occasional reunions; no doubt the ladies were well provided with money and encouraged other branches of trade besides those that supplied the necessities of their lords. At this period Cyprus was wealthy and thickly populated, but under the Venetians an epoch of misrule and consequent decadence set in, and conditions went from bad to worse when, in 1571, it finally fell into the hands of the Turks. A new period of prosperity commenced in 1878 when Britain acquired the Island as a leasehold in perpetuity from the Turks in consideration of an annual tribute of £5000 per annum, and a guarantee of Turkish Asiatic territory against further Russian encroachments. When on the outbreak of the war with Turkey in 1914 it became a British Crown Colony, the conditions of its administration did not change materially; but the elimination of the possibility of an ultimate reversion to Turkey removed an obstacle to union with Greece, and our offer to hand the island over, as an inducement to Greece to render assistance to Servia, seemed to bring the proposal within the range of practical politics. The success which Greece had achieved in liberating other communities with Greek affinities from Turkish rule and the general awakening of national sentiment after the war served

to stimulate the demand. Moreover, events elsewhere had shown that political ideals could be attained by determined agitation without resort to armed rebellion.

The Greek element of the population was largely responsible for fostering the agitation, the Church and professional classes especially supporting it with enthusiasm; furthermore, as the schools were not under Government control, they furnished a ready means of inoculating with the Greek ideal the younger generation who had no experience of Turkish rule. Only the Moslem community, which constituted some 20 per cent of the inhabitants, stood aloof. It will be noted that from the nature of the movement, having its basis on sentiment and not on any serious complaints against the Government except so far as it was alien, no concessions could be made to counteract it, for such as could be made would not have touched the root of the agitation. Under these conditions a firm and decisive "No" was the only possible answer to the agitators which did not entail a complete surrender. At the same time, to avoid bitter feeling, there was every reason for showing the utmost consideration as well as firmness. Both in dealing with the agitation and the disturbances to which it gave rise this was a factor of the greatest importance and one which added to the difficulties of the situation.

The machinery of Government was in no way designed to cope with an emergency and barely sufficed for the administration of the Island under normal conditions. It followed the usual Crown Colony organisation; at the centre was the Governor, Sir Ronald Storrs, with a nominated executive Council to assist him, under whose control the commissioners of

the six districts into which the Island was divided were responsible for all the branches of local administration. This meagreness of staff resulted in the commissioners being somewhat overweighted with the multiplicity of their duties, and in over-centralisation in all matters of policy. A locally recruited force of military police was maintained numbering 730 of all ranks, of whom about 250 were mounted. Eighty prison warders with police training may also be counted. Beyond the fact that it was armed and received a small amount of military training, the force was not in the ordinary sense a military police, and was scattered throughout the island in small detachments for the suppression of crime, supplementing the work of unarmed rural constables. The Government had therefore little or no police reserve to fall back on in an emergency. Moreover the police, though reasonably efficient in the exercise of their normal duties, could hardly be looked on as entirely reliable. They were, it is true, commanded by four British officers with Army training but there were no British N.C.O.'s. Subordinate officers and the personnel generally were recruited in part from the Moslem and in part from the Greek-speaking communities and might be expected to be influenced by communal sympathies; though in the event their loyalty stood the test well, and some of the subordinates showed considerable initiative. The only true reserve of force in the hands of the Governor was the infantry company which formed the military garrison, but under ordinary conditions the garrison was completely out of touch with the civil administration. It was perhaps more a survival of the precautionary measures and "flag-flying" deemed necessary when Cyprus was first taken over



than as a safeguard under more recent conditions. The company was not even maintained at full strength, as suitable barrack accommodation did not exist for more than 125 men, and its location had no connection with local problems.

In addition to the executive machinery of Government there also existed a legislative council, in part nominated, in part elected. This council, whose functions were largely critical, proved a source of weakness, as its elected members included some of the most prominent agitators, who used their position to encourage disaffection and to stir up anti-British feeling. The most notable feature of the agitation with which the Government had to cope was that it sought, not for independence or for a greater measure of self-government, but for a transfer to another Power—a unique case in the history of the Empire. Possibly the size of the Island and its population negated any idea of independence. Its area is only a little greater than that of Norfolk and Suffolk combined, and its population is some 350,000, of whom about 80 per cent are Greek-speaking and belong to the Greek Orthodox Church, and 20 per cent Moslem. About one-sixth of the population resides in the capital, Nicosia, and the five principal coastal towns—Famagusta (the chief port), Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Kyrenia—and these were the centres of disaffection. The remainder of the population consists chiefly of a peasantry distributed in country villages, some of considerable size. Nicosia has nearly 20,000 inhabitants and is enclosed by the old Venetian fortifications and moat. Larnaca and Limassol have each about half that number of inhabitants and are considerable commercial centres, though as ports they depend on

reasonably safe open roadsteads and piers for landing from small vessels. Famagusta is a somewhat smaller town, but there is a good harbour, and the port has been developed of late years to take ships of some size. It is the terminus of the light railway which traverses the Island from east to west. The actual town is enclosed by old fortifications and is the chief centre of the Moslem community, but there are considerable suburbs whose inhabitants are mainly Greek-speaking. Paphos and Kyrenia are smaller towns, chiefly important as the headquarters of Bishoprics.

Factors of military importance in dealing with disturbances may be briefly catalogued. Roads have been much improved of recent years and there are some 1000 miles of motorable road in the country. A telephone system connected Nicosia with most of the principal towns, but it, of course, could be easily interrupted, and the only telegraphic connection between the Island and the outside world was by cable from Larnaca to Alexandria, as no wireless transmitting station existed at the time. Topographically the Island divides itself into three well-defined areas: a hilly strip along the whole northern coast; a central plain, dry and treeless, stretching from the north-western to the eastern coast, called the Mesaoria; and a mountainous block occupying the south-west half of the Island, rising at its centre near Troodos to 6000 feet. Government Headquarters is at Nicosia, with its buildings in the suburban area outside the fortification. The military garrison is, however, stationed in the winter at Polemidhia, some four miles out of Limassol, and in summer at the hill station of Troodos, twenty miles further north. It will be noted that as the mountain block lies between Nicosia and Limassol, the

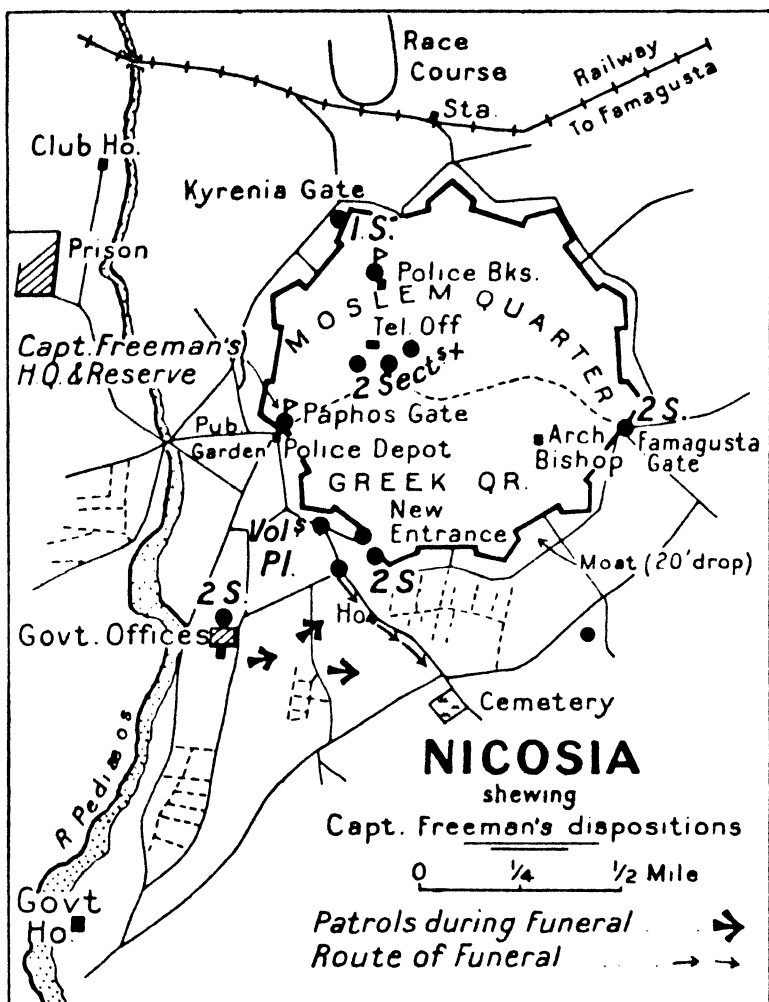
distance by road is consequently fifty-four miles, while road communications with Troodos are very steep.

The Church was so much concerned in the Nationalist movement that it requires special mention. It is an independent or autocephalous branch of the Greek (Orthodox) Church, with an Archbishop of Nicosia and three metropolitans of Kitium (*i.e.* Larnaca and Limassol), Paphos and Kyrenia. The Archbishop, though there is no doubt how his sympathies lay, did not play a leading part, but the Bishop of Kitium was an outstanding political firebrand who, by his violent manifestoes and by his action in resigning his seat on the legislative council, forced the hands of his colleagues and brought matters to a head.

Such, then, is a rough sketch of the general conditions under which the problem of restoring the authority of the Government by force with very inadequate means suddenly presented itself. The decision with reference to the Turkish tribute surplus had been announced in July 1931, and during the autumn it had led to acute agitation and a resolution in favour of a boycott of British goods and non-payment of taxes. As neither of these steps was a practical possibility, the resolution did little more than produce disunion among the agitators and a vague call for a policy of action among the extremists.

On 17th October, however, the Bishop of Kitium submitted a draft manifesto to his Nationalist colleagues in the legislative council which denounced the British Government and called for proclamation of union with Greece. The more cautious leaders were by no means ready to identify themselves with this document without further consideration, and their indignation was great when it was found that the





Bishop had already published it and had independently resigned his seat on the council, a step which they themselves were meditating. His action was publicly denounced by his colleagues, and it looked for the moment as if illegal action would receive little support. On the 20th the Bishop arrived at Limassol, and meetings were held on that and the following day to give him an opportunity of explaining his action. These meetings produced much Nationalist enthusiasm, and the Bishop made violent speeches which elicited applause but no immediate local outbreak. Their effect was indirect, as an exaggerated account which conveyed the impression that a policy of immediate action had been decided on was telegraphed to Nicosia, where the tendency had already been to support the action of the Bishop of Kitium. The Limassol telegram received at Nicosia in the afternoon produced great excitement; church bells were rung to collect the people and shops were shut. Soon a crowd of several thousands assembled and was addressed by various agitators, including members of the legislative council who had previously hesitated to tender their resignation but now found it expedient to do so and to follow the popular outburst.

Excitement increased, cries of "To Government House" were raised and a leading priest stepped forward and "declared revolution". A Greek flag which was handed to him he kissed, and swore the people to defend it. About 6.45 the leaders bearing the flag headed a procession which formed and started for Government House, moving in a confused, densely packed main body preceded by an advanced party of youths and surrounded by stragglers. On their way numbers of the crowd armed themselves with sticks

of various dimensions from the Government timber yard, and from tree guards along their route. Movement was slow and it was 8 P.M. before the main body reached Government House.

Meanwhile Police Headquarters, hearing of the occurrence, had at 7 P.M. despatched eight mounted and twelve dismounted men, the latter armed with batons, with orders to prevent the mob entering Government House grounds. A patrol of five men were also detailed to keep in touch with and report on the progress of the procession. As might perhaps have been anticipated, the party detailed was quite insufficient to check the mob. Eight baton men and five mounted police met the advance party at the outer gate of the grounds, but even before the main body of the procession arrived they were driven back with sticks and stones, the horses stampeding.

The crowd now pressed forward to Government House itself, at first halting some thirty yards off, but gradually the weight behind pushed it right up to the entrance steps. The District Commissioner, police and other officials standing in the porch, prevented the crowd entering the building, and some of the leaders struggled through the mob to speak to them. The Governor was prepared, if the crowd withdrew to a respectful distance, to see one or two of the leaders himself, but neither the District Commissioner who delivered the message nor the leaders themselves could make themselves heard. Cheering and shouting was continuous and a certain amount of stone-throwing had begun. After about an hour, *i.e.* about 9.30, the leaders, realising that they had no control and becoming nervous about the consequences to themselves of the storm they had raised, sent a message

of apology to Sir Ronald Storrs and discreetly disappeared. A considerable number of the crowd followed their example, but the younger and more violent elements remained in groups, stoning the police as opportunity offered. Further bodies of police now began to appear. The first to arrive was a body of forty who had been held in reserve but were not despatched till about 9 P.M., when it was heard that stone-throwing was going on at Government House. They came by a devious route, avoiding the crowd, and entered Government House from the back while the Commissioner and leaders were still attempting to speak to the crowd. A compact body of men like this taking the stone-throwers in the rear and forcing their way through might have produced more effect than this circumspect approach. At any rate their arrival did not relieve the situation, as stone-throwing increased in violence and the Commissioner was forced from the porch into the house. On this a copy of the Riot Act was sent for and more police were called for. This last reinforcement of twenty-two men arrived about 10.15 in four cars, and had considerable difficulty in reaching the house, which, after being stoned, they entered through broken windows. A little earlier the Commissioner had attempted to organise a baton charge, but as only the original police party of twelve carried batons, it took time to collect the men so equipped and the party was too small to produce any result. Every Greek boy learns to use a sling (so I was informed by a Greek interpreter on Gallipoli, who produced a sling to throw, without much success, cricket ball grenades into the Turkish trenches). The accomplishment adds considerably to the formidable effect of stone-throwing, and the baton charge could

not face it. In addition to stone-throwing, which was conducted from a distance by groups keeping under cover among trees, attempts were now made to force the door with a battering ram. This drew from the police inspector a request for permission to fire, but it was still thought advisable to use only unarmed men to disperse the rioters, who were by this time mainly young students. It is hardly surprising that such leniency had only the effect of encouraging the rioters, who now proceeded to set on fire the Commissioner's car standing in front of the house and the cars used by the last police reinforcement. A blaze has an exciting effect on the young, and soon burning sticks began to be thrown through the broken windows of the house. The police inside attempted to guard the windows but only became targets for more violent stoning. Another baton charge was ordered as a last resort before calling on the police to fire, but again the charge failed to reach any of the rioters. Even then, and in spite of further attempts at incendiarism, the order to shoot was not given till a bugle was blown and the Riot Act read. The effect of the warning was merely to draw fresh insults on to the police and fire was at last opened, a volley of twelve rounds followed by a few scattered shots. Twenty rounds in all were fired, with the result that seven men were wounded, one of whom died later. The effect was immediate, and the rioters dispersed pursued by the police, who reported the grounds clear by 11 P.M. But the use of fire had been too long delayed, as the house at this moment was found to be on fire and was soon completely gutted; clearly a very serious event affecting the prestige of Government, quite apart from the considerable value of the property destroyed. Moreover,

a sense of achievement in defiance of Government encouraged further display of violence.

An account of the riot has been given in some detail, although troops were not concerned in it, as it furnishes such a notable example of the danger of delay in dealing firmly with a crowd which has passed from the stage of being merely an excited assembly to dangerous rioting. Judging from the immediate results produced when fire was eventually opened, one may conclude that one or two shots or possibly the mere threat of fire would have sufficed at an earlier stage to bring the mob to reason before it had seriously committed itself. It is difficult to understand, too, why a larger force of police was not sent originally to control the situation, especially when one considers the difficulty which it might have been anticipated that a handful of unarmed men would have in dealing with overpowering numbers in darkness. Passive resistance against superior numbers is bound to be interpreted as weakness, and the use made of police reinforcements when they did arrive has already been commented on.

When the rioters dispersed, the occupants of Government House were able to reach the Commissioner's residence without interference and immediate steps were taken to prevent further outbreaks pending action to re-establish authority. The rioters had retired into the town, and its enclosed nature afforded the police authorities an opportunity of holding them there by posting pickets on the few exits till further help should arrive.

Breathing-space was thus secured, but it was evident that the local situation was very serious and that there was grave danger of some sort of rising all over the

Island quite beyond the capacity of the police to control. Immediate action to obtain reinforcements was accordingly taken; the company at Troodos was summoned to Nicosia at once, a telegram was sent to the C.-in-C. of the Mediterranean Fleet asking for a cruiser or aircraft carrier to be sent to the Island, and the G.O.C. Egypt was also asked for troops.

The problem to be solved was not easy. It clearly divided itself into two parts. First, with the limited force available, not exceeding 1000 armed men pending the arrival of reinforcements, to regain sufficient control of the situation to ensure the safety of Government officials and property, to prevent a spread of the disturbances and generally to prevent some quarter of a million of excitable people from committing themselves too deeply.

The second part of the problem, namely the restoration of normal conditions by measures which would not embitter an already discontented people, could be tackled effectively only after reinforcements had arrived. It was evident that no organised armed rebellion was to be feared. Sabotage and the excesses of excited mobs were the chief dangers, although the existence of a very large number of sporting weapons in the island might become a serious factor if control were not promptly re-established.

The part taken by the local garrison and by the reinforcements provided by the three fighting Services in dealing with the situation will now be described.

Captain Freeman, commanding the company of Royal Welch Fusiliers at Troodos, the senior military officer of the Island, received a telephone message

about midnight, 21st-22nd October, that disturbances had broken out at Nicosia and that his company was required there urgently. It was proposed that the company should march to Evrykhon, the western terminus of the railway, whence a train would take it to Nicosia. Captain Freeman realised at once that, as the march to Evrykhon was eighteen miles, he would be unable to reach Nicosia till midday; moreover, his transport, which consisted of only one limbered wagon, was insufficient to carry Lewis guns, ammunition, rations, etc. He decided, therefore, to commandeer by telephone all cars which could be collected from villages within reach and to despatch his company by successive platoons as cars were obtained. This decision gave most successful results. Captain Freeman with the leading platoon reached Nicosia at 7.30 A.M., the second platoon at 8.30, and the remaining two, under his second-in-command, Captain Hardy, at 10.30; but the four platoons numbered ninety-one men only owing to the low strength of the company already referred to. The leading platoon was at once employed to strengthen the police pickets which were holding the mob within the town and were made acquainted with the warning notices which had been posted in the town during the night. These sanctioned the use of force against any assembly of over five people which the order had made illegal. These notices, of which copies were held in stock, were part of an emergency scheme for dealing with disturbances; they also imposed a curfew and prohibited the carrying of firearms. The Governor, however, on the following day assumed further special powers by introducing, with the consent of the Home Government, a defence order-in-council which had



some years previously been prepared for application by proclamation to certain British possessions. This order gave powers to military officers tantamount to those which might be assumed under martial law, but did not involve the abdication of control by the Civil Power.

At 10 o'clock Captain Freeman attended a conference with the Governor, Police Commandant and chief civilian officials and was called on to give his opinion on the military aspects of the situation and the strength of the reinforcements required. He pointed out that his company was sufficient only to deal with the situation at Nicosia and that he had no reserves to meet disturbances which might occur elsewhere. He asked for a second company, which the G.O.C. Egypt had telegraphed could be sent by air if required, and at once set half a platoon on to clearing and marking out a landing-ground. The arrival of the remainder of his company enabled him to further increase the strength of the pickets over the town, to employ half a platoon to guard the Government offices and to retain one platoon in reserve. The initiative and energy displayed by Captain Freeman had evidently impressed the Governor and henceforward he was in practical charge of all security measures carried out by the police or troops under the authority of the order-in-council.

By 11 o'clock the situation at Nicosia was quiet and in hand, but in the meantime there were threats of trouble at the seaport towns. By reducing the strength of the pickets two platoons were made available and despatched under Captain Hardy to Famagusta via Larnaca. They arrived at Larnaca just in time to ensure that a mass meeting which was being held in

the main church dispersed without disorder. Hardy remained with one platoon at Larnaca and sent on the other to Famagusta, where the precautionary measure of placing women and children on to a mail ship had been taken, and a small volunteer force of British officials had been formed and armed to support the police.

These two towns remained quiet that day, but the reduced force at Nicosia had an anxious and trying time. Towards evening, especially, the mob from the town collected in an excited state in front of the picket on the causeway across the moat at the new entrance (*vide* sketch). There was a good deal of stone-throwing and no indication that the curfew ordered for 6 P.M. would be obeyed. This made it all the more difficult to carry out the sound and conciliatory policy of allowing well-disposed persons to pass the pickets to regain their homes, either villagers returning from the town or people from outside going to their houses in it. There was evident risk of attempts to rush the picket and of the troops retaliating for the stone-throwing by firing without orders. Various measures were taken to make the position more secure. The crowd was pushed back by a deliberate advance with fixed bayonets, and wire knife-rests, which the Commandant of Police had wisely prepared previously in case of trouble, were placed to block the road. Finally, as the crowd closed up on the wire and continued stone-throwing, they were again pushed back and a notice was read out in Greek, English and Turkish, that anyone approaching the wire or trying to move it would be shot. Stone-throwers who were taking advantage of the command afforded by the bastions of the old fortifications were dislodged

by a small patrol which turned their position. A Lewis gun was also placed to support the picket should it be driven in. These measures proved effective and the people dispersed to bed by 8.30 P.M. During all this, however, the only reserve available was eight men, and as information had been received that reinforcements coming by air from Egypt would not arrive till next day there was no possibility of relieving men who had been strenuously employed since midnight previous.

During the day trouble had not been confined to Nicosia. At 12.45 P.M. Captain Freeman received a wire from Limassol that the town was excited because food for the troops at Nicosia had been purchased in the market, and that the lorries to convey these supplies could not be loaded up. Subsequently it was ascertained that the Bishop of Kitium had been largely responsible for stirring up the people to riot. An hour later a further message reported that the Commissioner's house had been burnt. The only possible means of countering this development was to move the platoon from Larnaca to Limassol, and as the former town had remained quiet, this was done. Earlier information of the seriousness of the trouble at Limassol might have allowed the move to take place in time to save the Commissioner's house. As it was the house had been left unguarded.

No further disturbances occurred, and on the whole the critical day had passed with results very creditable to the small force in the Island. Reinforcements were now at hand. By great good fortune the Fleet was at Suda Bay, Crete, and two cruisers, *London* and *Shropshire*, with the destroyers *Acasta* and *Achates*, were despatched under Rear-Admiral Henley in

response to Sir Ronald Storrs' S.O.S. They arrived by 9 A.M. on the 23rd at the Island and were distributed, *London* to Larnaca, *Shropshire* to Limassol, *Achates* to Famagusta and *Acasta* to Paphos. Admiral Henley readily agreed to provide landing parties to control the situation at the ports until military reinforcements arrived to take over the duty. These parties numbered 200 men at Limassol, 100 at Larnaca and 50 each at Famagusta and Paphos. It was agreed, however, that the first military reinforcements should be so used as to enable a reserve force of troops and police to be formed, ready to take active steps to meet further disturbances inland and to carry out arrests. The Royal Welch platoon at Limassol, having been relieved by a landing party, moved at once to Paphos to deal with threatened disturbances there, arriving just in time to stop a mob intent on burning the Commissioner's house.

Good fortune backed by prompt action and close co-operation between the Services also expedited the despatch of reinforcements from Egypt. The G.O.C. British troops in Egypt received his first warning of trouble in Cyprus at 8 A.M. on the 22nd. The idea of despatching first reinforcements by air, breaking the flight at Ramleh (between Jaffa and Jerusalem), was immediately taken up, and it was ascertained that Headquarters Royal Air Force in the Middle East had seven (subsequently increased to eight) Vickers-Victoria troop carriers at Cairo which could be made available without delay. Each of these could take twenty men with their arms in addition to its crew. Simultaneously one company of the 8th King's Regiment was warned to be prepared to proceed by air, and another company and a machine-gun platoon

were also held in immediate readiness to move by sea should further reinforcement be required.

Another urgent appeal received about noon decided the G.O.C. that reinforcements must be despatched without waiting for authority from England. Immediate decision was necessary to enable the aircraft to reach Ramleh in Palestine in daylight, and a halt during the night at Ramleh was necessary before undertaking the sea crossing. The machines accordingly took off from Cairo about 1 P.M. and the flight was carried out in accordance with plans, except that the last plane to take off had to land at Rafa instead of Ramleh owing to failing light. Leaving Ramleh at 7 A.M. on the 23rd, the company landed at Nicosia about 11 A.M.; the Royal Air Force arranging, in order to minimise the risks of a forced landing on the water, that the sea between Cyprus and the mainland should be patrolled by the destroyer detailed for duty at Famagusta, a motor boat from Beyrouth and an Imperial Airways flying-boat.

Before leaving the subject of despatch of reinforcements it should be noted that the company at Cyprus, as it was a detachment found by a battalion at Khartum, could not be reinforced by its own regiment. The G.O.C. therefore selected the King's Regiment as a source of reinforcement owing to its previous acquaintance with the Island, but placed the officer in command of the company, although he was senior to Captain Freeman, under the orders of the latter as being in immediate touch with the situation. It is also worth noting how much it was a matter of luck that the co-operation of the Royal Air Force in the transport of reinforcements could be promptly arranged. The Royal Air Force and the Army Headquarters in

Egypt are not placed there with a definite view to co-operation; their strategic purposes are different and they are not under a single command. The juxtaposition of the two Headquarters was purely a geographical coincidence and it was by good fortune only that troop carriers were on the spot and not engaged elsewhere nor undergoing overhaul. The very intimate dependence of the two Services on each other is not always sufficiently recognised, and fortuitous happenings like this are apt to obscure the essential limitations of each Service. Without Army troops the Royal Air Force could not have rendered material assistance at Cyprus, and without the mobility conferred by Royal Air Force assistance, Army reinforcements would have been dangerously delayed. As it was the conditions were, by chance, exceptionally favourable.

The company of the King's (126 strong) arrived at an opportune moment when arrangements were being discussed to enable the funeral of the man who had died from the results of his wounds received in the original riot to be carried out safely, and without such restrictions as might incense the populace. A large procession would certainly desire to follow the funeral, and in order to reach the cemetery, which lay outside the town, permission to pass the pickets had to be given. Once outside the town control over the people would be very difficult if they meant mischief. Round the Government offices guards needed to be strengthened and men were required to be in a position to enforce the order which it was proposed to give, that one defined route must be followed. To avoid embittering feeling certain risks had to be accepted, as is often the case, but to minimise them

the new arrivals were at once ordered to place two platoons in position covering the Government offices, so posted as to be able to support the picket which the procession had to pass, and also to prevent a movement on the offices across country from the cemetery. As was anticipated, some trouble arose which proved the wisdom of these measures and the value of the small reserve still kept in hand. About 5 P.M., when the funeral began to disperse, attempts were made to reach the Government offices and a platoon from the reserve was brought out. A house on the route of the procession, belonging to a police officer, had also been broken into, and while it was being cleared the procession itself appeared on its way back from the cemetery. The situation was tense, as the procession had to be halted till the house was dealt with. Stone-throwing commenced and some difficulty was experienced in preventing the troops returning it with fire. Shooting had at all costs to be avoided as the procession was on the route it had received permission to use, and any serious collision would have given a handle for propaganda. The troops finally withdrew a little way to open the route, and as the situation calmed down it was at last possible to relieve the men of the Welch Fusiliers who had been constantly on duty for nearly forty-eight hours and were much in need of a night's sleep.

The evening of the 23rd marked the end of the first phase of the disturbances. There was now sufficient force available to make all important centres reasonably secure and to provide a small reserve. The initiative had begun to pass to the Government and the most urgent step was to deprive the hostile movement of its leaders in order to prevent it spreading

and becoming organised. The Bishop of Kitium had been particularly active in stirring up disaffection and news was received that he intended to go from Limassol to Paphos next day. The question at once arose whether he should be arrested. It was not an easy question to answer. Civilian officials were impressed by the likelihood that his arrest would touch religious susceptibilities and intensify hostile feeling with resulting bloodshed. Military opinion, on the other hand, held the arrest of leaders, whether lay or clerical, to be essential. The latter view prevailed and the Rear-Admiral agreed to carry out the arrest and if necessary to reinforce his landing-parties should there be untoward consequences. In the early hours of the 24th the arrest was carried out successfully by a naval party. As there had been indications previously that the arrest of the Bishop was expected, a number of precautions were taken to prevent serious resistance, pickets being established quietly to control the area in the neighbourhood of his Palace. The streets were, however, found empty and no alarm was given till the Palace was actually entered. Then a rocket was fired from the garden but it was apparently unobserved by the inhabitants, who presumably were in bed, as was the Bishop himself. Fifty of his supporters were actually in the Bishop's house, but a party of marines had no difficulty in keeping them quiet while the police effected the arrest, and the Bishop was then taken on board the *Shropshire* without incident. Shortly afterwards, however, news of the arrest spread, and at 5 A.M. bells were rung and a crowd collected and attacked with stones a guard of marines left at the Palace, causing the men to withdraw into the shelter of the house. A naval officer in command of a



neighbouring picket attempted to close the street with some police of his party, but the police disappeared to take cover round a corner, leaving only a midshipman and two naval ratings to hold the crowd. The police soon reappeared, however, opening fire without orders and without much consideration for the safety of the Navy's representatives. Firing had the effect of dispersing the crowd, but the conduct of the police shows the somewhat unreliable character of the force on which the Government had mainly to rely. To some extent these events also justified the fears of the civil authorities that the arrest would provoke disturbances; but against this must be placed what was gained by the removal of a firebrand who could not be left free to spread the general conflagration.

At Nicosia earlier in the same night five of the principal leaders were also captured. Here the action of the Government seems to have been unexpected, and a rapid and well-planned raid into the town, depending for its success entirely on surprise, was carried out. Cars were collected quietly and drove in pairs simultaneously to each of the five houses to be searched. Each leading car had, besides the driver, a police guide, with a policeman and soldier to carry out the arrest. The second car carried four soldiers to guard the arresting party from outside interference, and in one case the crew of the second car captured their man as he attempted to escape from the back door. The time occupied by the raid was half an hour only from the moment the cars left the police station till they reached the rendezvous, where a lorry was waiting to convey the prisoners to Larnaca, at which port it was arranged they should be provided with accommodation on H.M.S. *London*.

From the 24th onward the situation in all the main towns was fairly safe, though a number of riots occurred, some of which led to the firing of a few shots, but these incidents need not be recorded in detail. The shooting inflicted very few casualties and in every case dispersed the mob. The Navy continued to be responsible for the coast towns and the company of the King's Regiment were used chiefly to maintain order at Nicosia.

Captain Freeman was thus able to use his own company and part of the police to suppress acts of sabotage which began to occur throughout the Island. Telegraph lines were frequently cut, the railway torn up, a certain number of bridges and forest huts destroyed and some attempts to hold up ration lorries were made. This necessitated action against the villages concerned, and a number of arrests were effected by the police with the support of small parties of troops. Later on a section of armoured cars from Egypt arrived to assist, although their services were hardly needed. A flight of bombing aeroplanes, equipped for machine-gun action only, also flew to the Island, but they were never required to fire, and were used only for intercommunication and reconnaissance purposes. A continuous narrative of events after the first critical period is unnecessary, but a few incidents throwing some light on the nature of the disturbances and action will be recorded.

In the earlier phases of the insurrection no attempt had been made to employ arms, and throughout violence was confined to stone-throwing against Government forces and destruction of Government property. Non-combatants, who included a number of women and children, were not interfered with.

On the 24th, however, an attempt was made at Nicosia to send out lorries into the country to bring in villagers and arms into the town—a serious matter, as there were known to be some 7000 guns in the Nicosia district alone. The attempt was frustrated by posting extra pickets. On the same day, as a measure of precaution and in view of the possibility of a bitterer feeling arising, it was thought wiser to collect English families at houses within the protection of pickets at Nicosia.

On that day, too, the Archbishop, having been granted an interview with the Governor, stated that he could not hold himself responsible for the conduct of the crowd if prisoners were not released. H.E. wisely replied<sup>1</sup> that the responsibility rested entirely

<sup>1</sup> I suspect H.E. of justifiable plagiarism. Sir Ronald was probably familiar with the following incident, an account of which is given in *Unholy Memories of the Holy Land*, by B. Samuel, a book which has few compliments to pay to British administration in Palestine.

Mr. Samuel is comparing the regime of Sir Herbert Samuel with that of Lord Plumer and says: "Lord Plumer who succeeded Sir Herbert Samuel was as radically different a proposition as it was humanly possible to conceive. . . . Lord Plumer cared nothing either for Zionism or for Arab Nationalism as such, but was simply a soldier, habituated to the command of men, who conceived it his duty to carry out the policy of H.M. Government with as little fuss as possible. His technique, again, in handling the tinpot crisis . . . over the question of the Jewish regimental flag was admirable." Mr. Samuel explains that a proposal to install in the chief synagogues the regimental colours of Jewish battalions which had served in the Palestine campaign had given rise to an Arab counter agitation and continues: "A deputation of Effendis waited upon the Field-Marshal. In their most flowery and intensive language they explained what an outrage on Arab susceptibilities would be implied if such a ceremony were allowed to take place. If it, nevertheless, were to take place they would not be responsible for the consequences." After speculating on the probable attitude of Sir H. Samuel in the situation, Mr. Samuel goes on: "The reaction of the Field-Marshal was quite different. With paternal blandness he patted the objectors on the back while he benevolently reassured them: 'That's all right—

on the Government, whose armed forces were exerting every effort to restore order. That evening a crowd again collected at the new entrance and stoned the picket there. As during the day the spirit of violence had shown signs of increase, this could not be tolerated, and it was decided the crowds must be dispersed. A single round was therefore fired and had the desired effect.

On the 25th the Bishop of Kyrenia was turned back when he tried to enter Nicosia, and on his return to his own town collected a meeting which he exhorted to take active steps against the Government. Some rioting occurred and a Greek flag was hoisted on the Government building. The Bishop and some other leaders were, however, arrested the same night without resistance by a platoon sent for from Nicosia, and order was restored.

On the 29th Lieut.-Colonel King, commanding 1st Bn. the King's Regiment, arrived from Egypt to report and advise on the situation. He found that the situation on the Island was well in hand and that the troops already there were capable of dealing with it as long as the Navy continued their responsibility for maintaining order at the ports.

The Rear-Admiral had, however, by now begun to press for the relief of the Navy from the duty which he rightly held should fall on it only as an emergency

you're not asked to be responsible for the consequences—I'll be responsible'. After this manifestation of firmness as placid as it was drastic, the bubble of opposition was pricked and the flag duly installed."

Some of us have had the privilege and amusement of seeing Lord Plumer employ a similar technique most effectively under more strenuous conditions. The technique is well worth noting, though it is not given to everyone to possess the personality and charm required to develop its full value.

measure. On the 31st the G.O.C. was consequently asked to despatch the company standing by in Egypt, and it arrived by sea on 5th November. Lieut.-Colonel King then took command of troops on the Island and relieved the naval detachments the following day.

This may be said to mark the end of the disturbances, although normal conditions had still to be completely restored. Among other things there was some danger of communal rioting, as the Moslem population had, by remaining completely passive, aroused Greek resentment. A section of communists had also as usual seized the opportunity to show activity.

From the first appearance of the troops the police had worked in close combination with them, but the time had now come to re-establish civil authority. The police could not permanently rely on military assistance, and it was very necessary that they should regain prestige and confidence before military support was withdrawn. It had been sufficiently proved to the inhabitants that such assistance would be forthcoming in emergencies. Colonel King therefore, as conditions became more settled, by degrees concentrated his troops into centres from which they could give the police support if necessary, but as a matter of policy encouraged the latter to undertake the completion of the task of carrying out arrests and calling to account villages which had been concerned in acts of sabotage.

To bring the inhabitants of the towns to a proper sense of submission, the curfew order was maintained and strictly enforced when it was perhaps no longer required as a safety precaution. Not only had the

inhabitants to remain indoors during curfew hours, but showing of lights and the making of noise and music were prohibited. The resulting boredom had a strong influence in promoting a desire for return to a peaceful life, and established the authority of the Government without resort to an inconvenient number of prosecutions.

By the end of the year the garrison was reduced to its normal size, with the exception that it was decided that the company composing it should in future be maintained at full strength.

Was the Government attitude of toleration and leniency towards the agitation for union with Greece quite fair to the people of Cyprus? Clearer indications that such aspirations lay outside the region of practical politics might have saved much trouble. There was certainly no intention of adopting President Kruger's theory that the time to hit the tortoise is when he puts his head out, a policy which is sometimes tempting but always dangerous. When, however, trouble did arise, there was no possible alternative to firm action for the restoration of order and the quick re-establishment of Government authority. Yet the very nature of the agitation demanded to a special degree that nothing should be done which would leave a sense of bitterness. Fortunately the outbreak retained throughout much of its intended character of a non-violent movement, that is to say, although there was violent rioting, there was no resort to terrorism nor any serious attempts to organise armed rebellion, so extreme measures were not called for.

The problem presented to the Government after the attack on Government House was in the first

instance to prevent the people committing themselves more deeply, and this entailed defensive measures with consequent dispersion of force. The defensive measures taken were, however, by no means passive but conducted so as to exercise control. Although great forbearance was shown by the troops, there was no repetition of the hesitancy which had such disastrous results when Government House was burnt.

Equally important to the defensive measures was counter-offensive action required to re-establish Government authority, and to strike at the hostile organisation before it became more fully developed. Such action could not be initiated till reinforcements arrived, but it should be noted how quickly it was undertaken when the necessary force became available. The temptation to employ reinforcements to multiply and strengthen defensive detachments was resisted, and the correct course of forming a central reserve to undertake offensive action was immediately followed. Offensive action introduced a third factor in the problem. How should it be conducted so as to achieve results without giving rise to a lasting feeling of bitterness? Two factors added to the difficulty of the problem. The heads of the National Church were among the most important leaders of the movement and action against them entailed the danger of arousing religious fanaticism; drastic punitive measures would also stir popular sympathy in Greece, and this had to be avoided. Correct as was the attitude of the Greek Government, the press of the opposition showed an eagerness to exploit the situation for its own political advantage, publishing absurd and unfounded charges of excesses by British troops. This might easily have inspired attempts to render active

assistance to the Cypriots in spite of the measures taken by the Government to prevent such development.

As the people made no use of firearms it was a comparatively easy matter for the troops to maintain the principle of the minimum use of force, though it is worth noting how immediately effective was the result of the very few rounds that were fired to disperse dangerous rioters. To arrest prominent dignitaries of the Church entailed a difficult decision, and it is not surprising that civilian officials tended to be opposed to the course. It was a matter of policy on which the military adviser was justified in giving an opinion. He was entitled to point out that if hostile leaders were left free to spread and perfect the organisation of the revolt, the situation might pass entirely beyond the power of his limited forces to control it. He could also state whether his force was sufficient to effect arrests and to deal with local attempts at resistance or rioting which might occur.

This question of the arrest of leaders when revolt is not in arms is always difficult. Much depends on their personality. If they exercise real control over their people and their influence tends to prevent excesses, it may sometimes be advisable not to attempt to remove them but to treat them as responsible persons open to conviction by facts, and of value in negotiating a settlement of any genuine grievance that may exist. More commonly, when they form the driving power of the machinery of revolt, their elimination at the earliest possible moment and before the machinery is in full working order is indicated as the proper course. Delay gives the leaders time to add to and to organise more fully their forces. Insurrection can



never spring into existence fully organised and it may grow or diminish but never remain stationary. Hesitation and timidity in dealing with it must encourage and facilitate growth, and if leaders are treated as immune it is apt to be interpreted as a sign of timidity.

No point stands out more clearly in this episode than the good results obtained by the immediate resumption of the initiative when reinforcements arrived. The rebels were struck before they realised that the initiative had passed from them and this greatly facilitated the capture of their leaders by surprise. If the alternative of dispersing troops and adding to the number and strength of defensive detachments had been followed, the initiative would have remained with the rebels and the temptation to arm themselves would have been great.

The narrative given is not sufficiently complete to do justice to the services rendered by the Navy. As in the Palestine outbreak, landing-parties were invaluable in maintaining control over the important coastal towns and liberating troops for work inland. Various incidents in which they dealt with rioting quite as effectively as Army troops have not been touched on. The strength of naval detachments was no more than sufficient to meet requirements, and it was a wise thought which prompted the Commander-in-Chief when asked to send one cruiser, to despatch two, and two destroyers. The speed with which the ships arrived brings out the point, which is sometimes overlooked in comparing the pace at which reinforcements can be conveyed by air or water, that ships' passages are uninterrupted whereas troop-carrying aircraft, as a rule, cannot proceed during hours of darkness unless fully organised landing-grounds are

available and suitably spaced in respect to refuelling necessities. Obviously the fullest effect is produced by exploiting the potentialities of all three Services working in close co-operation, as we have seen them both here and in the Palestine affair. Army officers and the civil authority should remember, however, that ships cannot provide large landing-parties and still remain capable of carrying out purely naval duties. Landing-parties must be treated as an emergency measure and they should be relieved by troops at the earliest opportunity. If, for example, it had become necessary to guard against attempts to run arms or filibusters it might well have become necessary to re-embark naval personnel at short notice.

There are few other points that require comment. Clearly there was no necessity to proclaim martial law as the order-in-council provided all the special powers required. In any case the military staff was much too small to assume complete control and to enforce martial law in its fullest sense. In checking acts of sabotage, and tracing those responsible for them, measures dictated by necessity rather than authorised by the order-in-council had to be taken in the early days of regaining control; rough-and-ready methods which almost fell under the heading of the *de facto* exercise of martial law. The moment necessity for such methods passed, they were abandoned and normal civil procedure was resumed. At no time did the methods entail severe punishment of a lasting character, and they were designed to produce prompt obedience to orders and the surrender of the guilty. In every insurrectionary movement the danger of making martyrs must be faced. This can be minimised by firmness and tact. The manner in which the arrange-

ments for the funeral of the man killed in the Government House riots were carried out deserves study as an example of the extent to which consideration for the susceptibilities of the people can be shown, of the safety precautions necessary and of firm action in maintaining control.

Altogether the fighting Services emerged with much credit from the Cyprus episode. Their mobility and power of mutual co-operation was strikingly illustrated. Mishandling of an undoubtedly critical situation would have entailed many serious complications, but a high standard of firmness, promptitude, initiative and a well-balanced appreciation of political considerations were displayed by junior officers who found themselves in a responsible position. The troops showed their accustomed good discipline and patience under provocation, and great credit is due to the N.C.O.'s who, owing to the shortage of officers, had tasks imposed on them requiring a high standard of leadership and intelligence.

THE END

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